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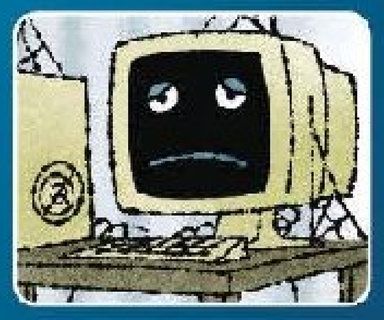

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Smarter technology for a Smarter Planet:

What database integration means to this blood sample.

It means doctors in Ethiopia will be able to instantly compare this blood sample to over 41,000 HIV treatment histories to help their patients receive the best treatment regimen possible. The EuResist Network is helping doctors predict patient response to various HIV treatments with over 78% accuracy—outperforming 9 out of 10 human experts in a recent study. The tool is built on an IBM analytics solution that integrates a variety of disparate databases onto a flexible IBM DB2® platform to process complex metadata more effectively than anything else on the market. A smarter organization is built on smarter software, systems and services.

Let's build a smarter planet. ibm.com/hospital

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A data visualization of 41,000 HIV case histories.

The EuResist Network is a nonprofit partnership composed of Karolinska Institutet (Stockholm, Sweden), Max Planck Institute for Informatics (Saarbrücken, Germany), University of Siena (Italy), Informa s.r.l. (Rome, Italy) and University of Cologne (Germany). The EuResist project has been cofunded by the European Commission. IBM, the IBM logo, ibm.com, DB2, Smarter Planet and the planet icon are trademarks of International Business Machines Corp, registered in many jurisdictions worldwide. Other product and service names might be trademarks of IBM or other companies. A current list of IBM trademarks is available on the Web at www.ibm.com/legal/copytrade.shtml. © International Business Machines Corporation 2010.

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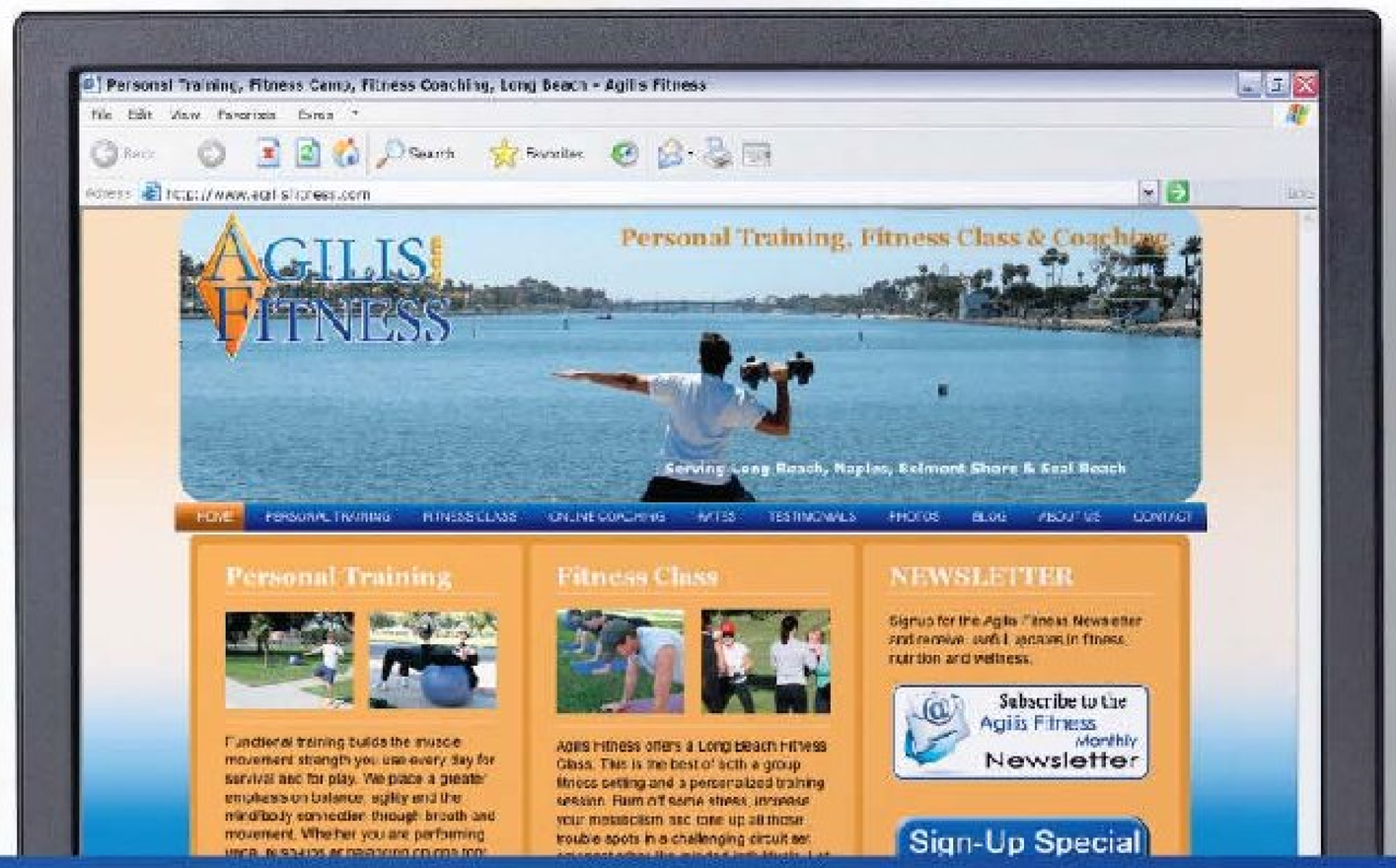

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Techlog

STEVE FOX

Keeping Current on Digital Developments

EVEN IF YOU'RE the kind of alpha geek who's happiest with your head in the (Internet) cloud and your fingers inside a PC case, keeping up with all the latest developments in technology has become nearly impossible. The pace of digital innovation is accelerating at such a prodigious clip that there's simply too much to keep track of.

If you're looking for confirmation of this trend, check out the eye-opening chart (at the bottom of this column) that Google generated when I typed in the phrase "tech innovations timeline."

Impressive, no? In fact, innovation's growth curve is so steep that keeping up with technology can feel like a full-time occupation. For *PCWorld* editors, that's the job description. For regular humans—who may love technology but have day jobs elsewhere—there are likely better uses of your valuable time than, say, tracking upcoming Android releases or proposed wireless standards.

This year's CES Innovations Awards honor technology pioneers and provide a behind-the-scenes glimpse of where tech is heading.

To help you out, we've taken two tacks. First, we've laid out a roadmap of the year's anticipated digital delights ("The Tech to Watch in 2011," page 87). If you're seeking a high-level view of what to expect—from the latest chips to zippy 4G networks—Senior Editor Tim Moynihan's article should give you enough info to evaluate your tech needs for the coming year (and even sound knowledgeable if cocktail-party banter turns to matters digital).

Second, for folks who want a deeper dive, *PCWorld* has teamed up with the 2011 Consumer Electronics Show to sponsor the CES Innovations Design and Engineering Awards. The winners, in 35 categories, represent the best and brightest that tech has to offer today. You can view a complete rundown of the winners at CES's own awards page (find.pcworld.com/71141)—or for a visual traipse through some of our favorite categories, check out the slideshows at our CES page (find.pcworld.com/71142).

I certainly don't want to spoil the fun of discovering many of these goodies for yourself. But I thought I'd at least point you to five personal favorites.

1. Dynamics Card 2.0: This programmable credit card is chock-full of sophisticated electronics, yet it works with existing magnetic-stripe readers. Various buttons on the card allow you to switch between accounts, hide the account number until you enter a code, and dynamically create new codes and stripe properties for payments.

2. Firstech DroneMobile: With this system, you can use your Android, BlackBerry, or iPhone handset to interface with your car. You can unlock your vehicle remotely, perform diagnostics on it, and even figure out if your kids are driving the car when they shouldn't be.

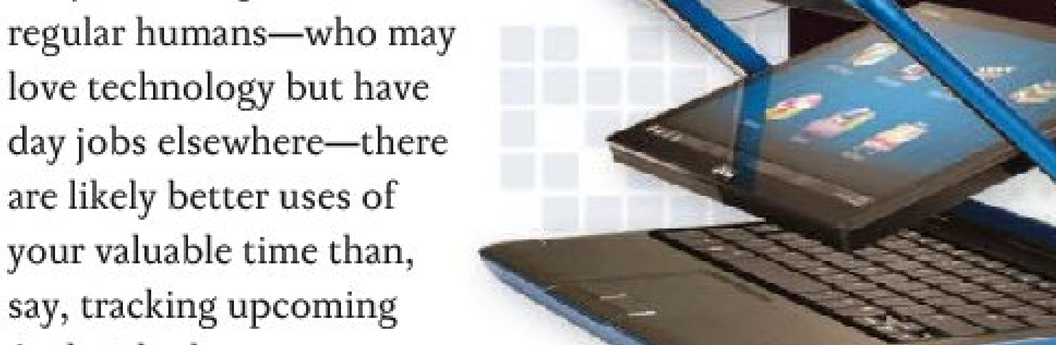
3. Monster Cable Max 3D Glasses: Designed with the goal of playing Switzerland to the many factions engaged in the 3D wars, these specs work with any 3D HDTV on the market.

4. Dell Inspiron Duo: A 10.1-inch-screen hybrid, the Inspiron Duo can instantly convert—with just a swivel—from a keyboard-driven clamshell-style laptop to a touchscreen tablet. Dell gets loads of style points for this clever design.

5. ThinkEco Modlet: This power-outlet add-on transmits a wireless signal to your PC, where you can manage devices' power consumption, including the dreaded "vampire power."

If you're intrigued, look for more of our CES coverage online. We'll be happy to help you stay up-to-date.

Steve Fox is editorial director of PCWorld.



SO THAT'S WHY it's so hard to keep up. This Google graph of "tech innovations" shows that the pace of change just keeps accelerating.

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Smarter technology for a Smarter Planet:

What 3 million lines of code means to a piece of luggage.

It means Amsterdam Airport Schiphol will be able to accurately and efficiently move 70 million pieces of luggage per year—20 million more bags per year than they used to. The airport's automated baggage solution will allow them to increase their baggage handling capacity by 40%, so they can meet the growing demand placed on them as one of Europe's largest transport hubs. This system is built on IBM Rational® and Tivoli® software and runs on Power Systems.™ A smarter business is built on smarter software, systems and services.

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A data visualization of the flow of baggage traffic at Amsterdam Airport Schiphol.

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PCW Forum

A number of readers this month added useful points to our December articles on television streaming, firmware updates, Windows time-saving tricks, landline-phone alternatives, and more. You can always send comments to letters@pcworld.com or visit and join our forums at find.pcworld.com/55165.

Kill Your Cable?

In the December issue, the article "Kill Your Cable, If You Dare" [*Forward*] discussed streaming TV from the Internet. But Internet service providers are already talking about limiting the amount of data that can be streamed or downloaded. How will TV streaming affect Internet service costs and quota limits?

For Internet service, I use Charter Communications. Charter recently announced changes to its Acceptable Use Policy to limit an individual's data transfer to 100GB, 250GB, or 500GB per month, depending on the type of service the customer has.

I gather that AT&T allows unlimited data transfer for its home services at present but is considering setting limits.

It appears that many Internet service providers will begin setting monthly data quotas and changing their rates to reflect quantity as well as speed.

We recently changed to digital TV service. Are companies going to limit or charge for the amount of data that is transferred to our HDTVs? Will customers with lots of channels and/or many TVs be charged for the quantity of data?

Telephone service has gone digital both in homes and for cellular connections, and AT&T has begun charging different rates for data transfer on its cell phones. Is in-home phone service next?

James Keck, Reno, Nevada

Firmware Updating

I found your December article on firmware updating ["Update the Firmware on Your HDTV, Camera, Smartphone, PC, and More," *Here's How*] very helpful. However, I would add some cautions on updating HDTV displays.

First, read about the update and what it is intended to accomplish. It may extend the television's capabilities or resolve a functional issue.

If your display has been performing optimally and doesn't have the issues documented in the firmware fix, consider leaving it alone—especially if the set has been professionally calibrated. Sometimes a firmware update installs default settings that wipe out settings that were adjusted for best performance.

While precision calibration is becoming less important due to the greater accuracy of many modern displays, a little caution can go a long way.

Conversely, input devices such as Blu-ray players often need updates just to be compatible with recent movie software releases.

Dale Beshansky, Clovis, California

Adobe Premiere Elements 9

You reviewed Adobe Premiere Elements 9 in the December issue. My experience with Premiere Elements 8 was disappointing. Though my computer exceeded the recommended minimum hardware requirements, Premiere Elements 8 was painfully slow and crashed frequently. After exploring various user forums, I gave up on it and bought a competing product that works great.

Ron Stern, Orange City, Florida

Conversation View

I agree with Edward N. Albro that Conversation View haters are way off base ["Google Yields to the Haters of Gmail's Conversation View," *Forward,* December]. You *can* delete individual messages: Click the down arrow next to Reply, and in the drop-down menu (the same place you find Print for a single message), you'll see the option 'Delete this message'. I use it all the time.

Belinda de la Libertad, Orange, California

Re: 'The 3D Printer Revolution Countdown' [find.pcworld.com/71086]: I am hopeful that a killer app in the future will give me an excuse to get [a 3D printer]. Kind of like people in the '80s saying they got their PC for home finance.

kronoscornelius, PCWorld.com forums

'Make Windows Smarter'

An addendum to your December cover story: On smaller screens, you can get rid of the bars on top of Internet Explorer 8 by right-clicking each bar and turning it off. You can also slide the Command bar all the way to the right so that only the Home icon and a small arrow remain showing, leaving more room for tabs. IE 8 looks cleaner, and your screen is optimized. Or simply use IE 9 Beta.

VHMP01, PCWorld.com forums »

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PCW Forum

Landline Alternatives

Regarding "Cut the Cord: Low-Cost and Free Landline-Phone Alternatives," *Reviews and Rankings,* December: Verizon is our local landline and cell phone provider. Its tech support is arrogant, uninformed, and shoddy; but the phone works when the power goes (as it often does in our remote rural area). The voice quality is good, and the user skill level is minimal. At NetTalk's site, you have to pay and sign up to find out what your phone number would probably be—reminiscent of the old Soviet Union, which banned phone books.

Dzebruk, PCWorld.com forums

'Beyond PayPal'

The article "Beyond PayPal: New Personal Payment Sites" [*Consumer Watch,* December] needs one clarification.

With the Obopay service, a person doesn't need to set up and fund an account before making a payment to you. Instead, anyone can send you a payment simply by using their debit/credit card. The service lets anyone accept debit/credit card payments and does not require the person making the payment to create an account for payments.

Also, it is a bit different (and hopefully better for most people) than PayPal in that you can receive payments for free, right into your own bank account.

David Schwartz, VP, Product and Corporate Marketing, Obopay

CORRECTIONS

JANUARY'S "FREE, PAID Antivirus Compared," *Reviews and Rankings,* had an incorrect version of the chart for paid antivirus products, affecting primarily Kaspersky Anti-Virus 2011. The figures for Kaspersky should have been: signature-based detection of malware, 95.7 percent; fully blocked attacks by real-world malware, 88 percent; successful cleanup of active malware components, 80 percent.

In December's *Hassle-Free PC,* the item "Fix a Windows System That Randomly Freezes" recommended a Microsoft hotfix for this problem (in Windows 7), but omitted its URL. Go to find.pcworld.com/71082 for the download.

PCWorld regrets the errors.

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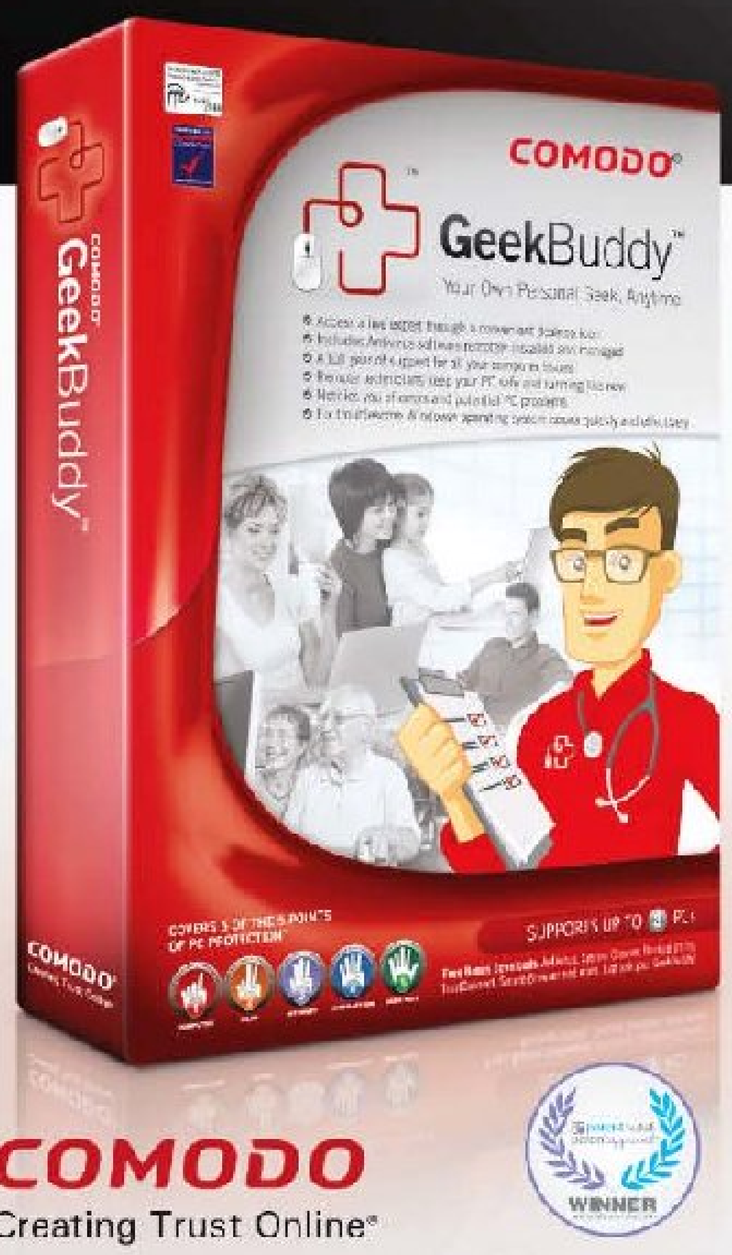

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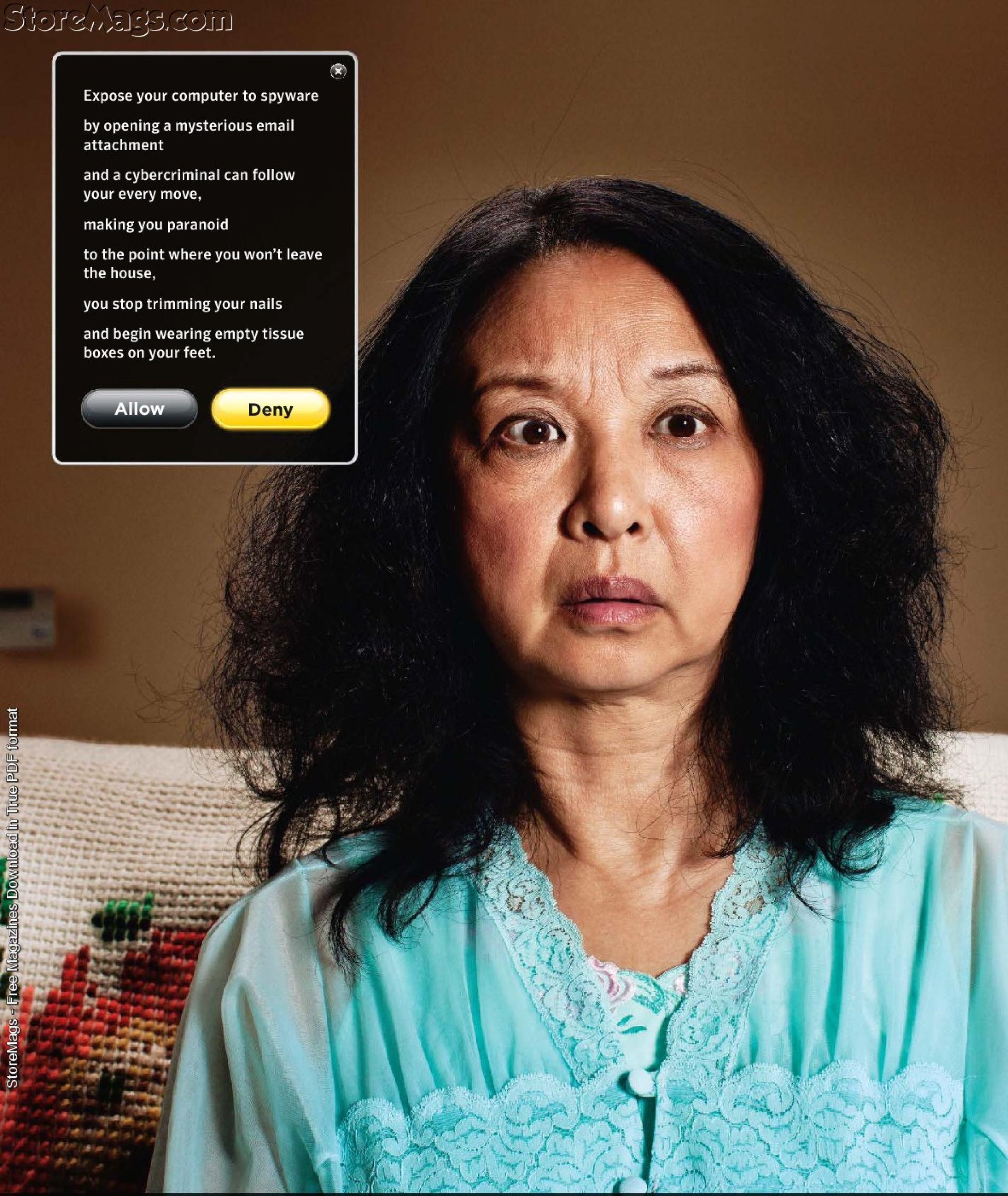

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Forward

IN PLACE OF a Caps Lock key, Google equips the keyboard on its CR-48 Chrome OS laptop with a dedicated Web search button.

Google CR-48: First Look at the First Chrome OS Laptop

BY EDWARD N. ALBRO

Google's prototype Chrome OS machine delivers little more than the company's browser in a box.

CURIOUS ABOUT Chrome OS? Shut down every app on your PC except Google Chrome (the browser), and maximize that window. Voilà! It looks like Chrome OS. Add a few apps from the Chrome App Store, and you'll have an exact replica.

Google's CR-48, the company's proof-of-concept Chrome OS laptop, is essentially Google Chrome in a flat black box—no desktop, a rudimentary file system that you can't access directly, and virtually nothing else that can't run in a browser.

But if Chrome OS is just a stripped-down version of Linux that's designed to run a browser, why are commercial laptops capable of using it lagging two years behind Google's OS announcement?

App or Bookmark?

Many Chrome Apps are no more than smart bookmarks. Our CR-48 came with nine apps already installed: a get-started tour of the notebook; a pair of games; links to the Chrome Web Store, Gmail, Google Maps, Google Talk, and YouTube; and Scratchpad, a basic note-taking app that actually stores files on the CR-48 itself. (The laptop carries a solid-state drive, but Google has not revealed how big it is.) You can type short notes in Scratchpad, and the app will automat- »

PHOTOGRAPHS: ROBERT CARDIN

PCWORLD.COM

For a practical introductory FAQ on Google's new operating system, see find.pcworld.com/71143. For an analysis of how Chrome OS and HTML5 are likely to coexist, see find.pcworld.com/71144.

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ically store them locally and, in theory, sync them to your Google Docs account. But my notes never showed up in my Google Docs account.

The CR-48 has no equivalent of Windows Explorer for viewing and managing files. You can find Scratchpad files, for instance, only through the app itself.

The only way to alter your system is through the Settings menu in the Chrome browser, where you monitor your Internet access, change network settings, manage user accounts, and the like.

Internet or Bust

If you're not connected to the Internet on this laptop, you're dead in the water. I wrote this article in Google Docs on the CR-48 while commuting, with a Verizon MiFi card for connectivity. But in midcommute, Chrome reported that it couldn't reach Google Docs. On any other laptop, I could have copied my text into Word and kept working there. But on the CR-48, I had to paste my changes into an Evernote note and rely on my connection to that service.

A LINK TO the Chrome Web Store came preinstalled as an app on our test model of the CR-48, Google's Chrome OS–powered laptop.

On the plus side, the CR-48 goes from switched off to the log-in screen in just 15 seconds. And once you log in, you're ready to work seconds later. That's because a Chrome OS system has only one program to load after log-in: the Chrome browser.

Though Google doesn't plan to sell the CR-48, the unit has some quirks. In lieu of a Caps Lock key, it offers a dedicated button for opening a new tab in Chrome. If you prefer, you can restore the Caps Lock key and use <Ctrl>-T to open new tabs.

The top row of the keyboard has buttons dedicated to Web browsing: forward and back arrows for moving between pages, a key for page reloading, and a button for toggling full-screen view on and off. A button that is supposed to jump you from one browser tab to another didn't work on my system.

The CR-48 has a VGA port, a USB port, and an SD Card slot. But I couldn't access any files on the USB drive I inserted in the port. I could access files via SD Card, but only by going to a site like Picnik where I could see the files in the file upload box.

When cloud apps gain a little more polish and wireless Net access becomes reliable everywhere, a Chrome OS machine may work well for lots of people. But based on my experience with the CR-48, I don't expect using the Chrome OS to be a revolutionary experience. Instead, it feels a bit like working with one hand tied to your side: possible, but awkward.

TECH SPOTLIGHT: NEXT-GENERATION GPS

GPS-Enabled Goggles

Zeal Optics' Transcend goggles feature a display in the lower right corner of the goggle lens that lists stats such as speed and altitude. Zeal says that the display produces "absolutely no distractions," but suggests viewing it while in the chairlift. Two versions of the goggles are available, starting at $399.

Digital Breadcrumb Trail

What if you get lost and want to find your way back to your starting point? Bushnell's $55 BackTrack Point-3 stores three GPS locations; mark them when you reach them, and continue on your way. If you want to return to one of the marked spots later on, simply select it, and the device will guide you back.

Geotagging Dongle

Foolography makes wireless dongles (like the Unleashed Dx000 shown here) that connect to a DSLR camera and work with a Bluetooth-enabled GPS receiver, transmitting location data to the receiver and then automatically embedding geolocation data in each image. Dongle pricing starts at $170.

Black Box for Your Car

Looking for details on your car's travels? Mio's GPS driver recorder tracks the location of your automobile; the device also contains a camera for recording on-road action and a G-sensor for tracking acceleration and deceleration. The GPS driver recorder is not yet available in the United States.

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Verizon 4G LTE Debuts

THE NEXT generation of wireless networks is here. Sprint was the first U.S. carrier to offer 4G (WiMax) service, but the dominant flavor of 4G in the future—Long-Term Evolution—has just begun to roll out. Verizon turned on the service in 39 cities on December 5; it says the new network will deliver download speeds of 5 to 12 megabits per second—ten times as fast as 3G service.

Right now consumers can access LTE service on their laptop using a 3G/4G USB stick from Verizon—no LTE phones are available at press time, but Verizon says the first LTE phones for its network will go on sale by mid-2011. Meanwhile, LTE radios will begin showing up in all kinds of mobile devices from tablets to video cameras.

LTE service will certainly make existing mobile apps run much faster. The picture quality of streaming video will improve, and videoconferencing will become a smoother experience.

Downloading files or loading Web pages will become far less tedious. Verizon and others also hope that a whole new wave of apps that exploit 4G speeds will emerge—for example, telemedicine apps for remote doctor visits, augmented-reality apps, and mobile gaming.

But speed isn't LTE's only claim to fame. Its networks run on a lower-frequency-spectrum band and use advanced antenna technology to move the signal into hard-to-reach places where a 3G signal would normally be blocked or disrupted.

This will enable LTE networks to connect automobiles that are moving at high speeds—a capability that may open up a whole new field of wireless apps for in-car use. LTE will also permit entire networks of outdoor advertising (such as bus-stop ads) to stream video advertising.

Most interestingly, LTE signals will be able to reach inside houses far more reliably than 3G data signals can.

This might allow consumers to completely replace their household's wired DSL or cable connection with a single mobile hotspot that would connect both home devices and mobile devices.

—Mark Sullivan

ILLUSTRATIONS: OTTO STEININGER

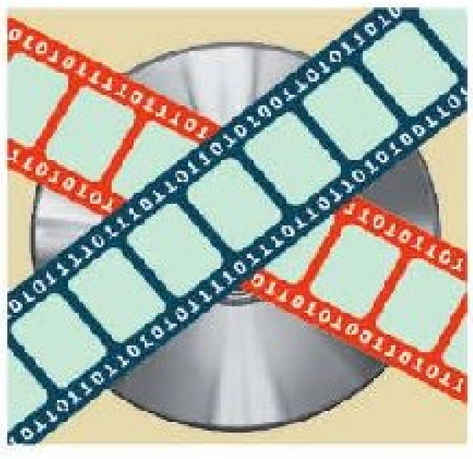
BRIEFS

AT&T MiFi Finally Here

AT&T may ban iPhone tethering on its network, but with its new offering of Novatel's MiFi 2372 hotspot, who needs tethering? The MiFi 2372 is a pocket-size wireless router that serves as a portable hotspot for connecting up to five Wi-Fi devices to AT&T's 3G cellular data network. The company says the MiFi 2372 can achieve download speeds of up to 7.2 mbps. AT&T was slated to begin selling the MiFi 2372 in December 2010 for $50 after a $100 rebate.

Netflix Streaming-Only Plan Arrives

Netflix now offers an $8-per-month subscription plan that delivers no DVDs, but all the streaming video you want. Netflix's streaming-only plan is on a par with Hulu Plus's, whose new subscription price just dropped from $10 per month. Though Hulu Plus's price reduction is appealing, it covers only 2400 episodes of TV shows, whereas Netflix has more than 20,000 available movies and TV shows.



Baby, You're a Rich Man

The good news for fans of the Fab Four: The Beatles' main body of music is now available on iTunes. The bad news: You'll pay a hefty premium for the convenience. Whereas iTunes is selling most Beatles albums for $13 apiece, Amazon offers CD versions of the same titles for only $8 per disc. Similarly, the double album titled *The Beatles* (but better known to fans as the "White Album") costs $20 at iTunes, but $12 at Amazon.

SSD Reliability Questioned

Solid-state drives seem to be at least as unreliable as traditional hard disks, according to French hardware review and optimization site Hardware.fr. In the data it used, 2.05 percent of SSDs were returned as nonfunctioning, versus 1.94 percent of hard-disk drives. The report was based on sales and returns data from an unnamed online retailer. For more details, see find.pcworld.com/71139.

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DESPITE 'SOME GOOD actors,' industry self-regulation of privacy has not worked adequately, according to FTC chairman Jon Leibowitz.

FTC Calls for Online Do-Not-Track Privacy List

U.S. WEB USERS should be able to sign up for a do-not-track list that would prohibit Websites and advertising networks from following their movements online, according to the U.S. Federal Trade Commission.

Modeled after a national do-not-call list that targets telemarketers, the do-not-track list would help protect consumers' privacy by creating a uniform mechanism for opting out of online tracking, the FTC says. The Internet industry or the U.S. Congress could implement the do-not-track list, the FTC suggests.

An FTC report concludes that private industry has failed to adequately address privacy concerns online.

Opponents of a do-not-track list say it could dramatically decrease the effectiveness of online targeted (or behavioral) advertising.

The FTC is not yet calling for do-not-track legislation; however, Internet businesses should act quickly to implement a universal do-not-track list, according to FTC chairman Jon Leibowitz.

New privacy protections are needed because Internet users are often confused about how companies are collecting and using personal data, Leibowitz says.

The FTC report also calls on companies to build privacy protections into their everyday business practices. Businesses should ensure reasonable security for consumer data, limit their collection and retention of personal data, and make efforts to ensure that the data is accurate, the report says.

Companies should also give customers choices as to how their data is collected and shared, the report says, but companies should not have to seek consumer permission to collect data for such commonly accepted practices as product shipping, internal operations, and fraud prevention.

The FTC urges online businesses to create short, standardized privacy policies that are easy to understand.

—Grant Gross

BETA WATCH

EDWARD N. ALBRO

Disconnect: Turn Off Tracking

If you're a savvy Web surfer, you know that you're being tracked. When you go to a site such as TechCrunch, for instance, the Facebook fan box shows lots of people you know. If you find that kind of "personalization" creepy, try Disconnect, a browser extension for Chrome and Rockmelt (other browsers coming soon) that blocks tracking by Digg, Facebook, Google, Twitter, and Yahoo. This free software identifies which of the sites are tracking you on each page you visit. Unfortunately, it doesn't do anything to stop big advertising networks that are keeping an eye on you. disconnectere.com

DISCONNECT IS A browser extension that keeps Digg, Facebook, Google, Twitter, and Yahoo from tracking your Web movements.

Social Photo Album Creator: Album Collaboration

Most big events in your life—weddings, birthdays, holiday parties—include more than one person with a camera. But collecting all of the photos from the event and sharing them on Facebook can be a pain. This Facebook app from Kodak allows you to create a photo album and invite your friends to contribute their pictures. The photo giant has some glitches to work out: If you publish an album, and someone else adds photos, the new pictures don't show up automatically. You have to go into the app and republish the updated album—and you wind up with multiple versions in your profile. That's unnecessarily messy. apps.facebook.com/kodak-social

IF YOU WENT to a party where lots of people took photos, you can share them in one Facebook album with a new Kodak app.

PHOTOGRAPH: BLOOMBERG CONTRIBUTOR

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HYPERBARIC TECHNOLOGY LETS cooling fans inside the Dell Vostro V130 run at lower speeds.

Dell Laptop Uses New Intel Cooling Technology

DELL'S VOSTRO V130 is one of the first laptops to incorporate Intel's Hyperbaric cooling technology, using an internal fan to draw air into the laptop to keep it from overheating. Most designs use the internal fans to push hot air out.

The Intel design channels the drawn-in air toward key components, such as the CPU, to keep them cool. Air enters the left side of the laptop, and warm air escapes out the right.

The system allows the fans to run at lower speeds, which results in a quieter laptop, says Rajiv Mongia, a principal engineer at Intel. It also yields a cooler laptop, according to Intel, because the cooling system is more efficient.

"By using cold air directly from the outside and then directly blowing across the hot components, you create a more efficient cooling solution. By blowing air across the components, you create more-intense convective cooling and often get more cooling flow through the platform," Mongia explains.

Intel has not yet measured the impact of Hyperbaric cooling on laptop battery life, according to Mongia.

The Vostro V130 targets business users, a Dell spokesperson says. It has a 13.3-inch screen and weighs 3.5 pounds. It is powered by ultra-low-voltage Core i3 or Core i5 processors from Intel. The laptop comes equipped with a six-cell battery that offers 4.5 hours of battery life, according to Dell.

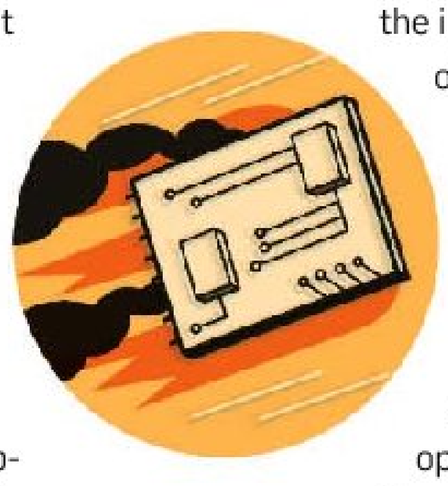
The laptop can accommodate up to 4GB of RAM and up to a 640GB hard drive. It also has an HDMI port, 802.11n wireless technology, a five-in-one media card reader, and a Webcam. WiMax broadband and a SIM card slot are extra-cost options. Prices for the Vostro V130 start at $429, and the laptop ships worldwide.

—Agam Shah

> Also: What would a geek do with an inexpensive faux wood stove? Why, stick a PC in it, of course.

Wood Stove as PC Case

Modders-Inc member Bobdbone picked up a low-cost, electricity-powered, artificial wood stove and took the appliance apart to inspect its insides. The interior contained lights meant to shine onto rotating strips of metal, to create the illusion of flames. It also had a lot of empty space, which Bobdbone decided to fill with a computer.



He inserted a PC into the stove, mounted a monitor on the front, and straightened out some bends in the stove's frame to fit PC components. Then he added wiring and openings for ports and the disc drive.

A custom-made smoke generator sends smoke out the chimney, and subtle LED backlighting and crackling-fire sound effects enhance the mood. When the PC is idle, he slips in a fireplace DVD and switches on the other effects.

For detailed instructions, visit the Modders-Inc forum thread at find.pcworld.com/71103.

—Elizabeth Fish

For more hacks, tips, and hardware news, visit the GeekTech blog at go.pcworld.com/geektech.

ILLUSTRATIONS: HARRY CAMPBELL (LEFT); OTTO STEININGER (RIGHT)

Apple iOS 4.2 Update: What's New

APPLE RECENTLY released iOS 4.2 for iPad, iPhone, and iPod Touch. The update introduces more than 100 iOS 4 features to the iPad.

Here's a look at the highlights from iOS 4.2.

AirPrint allows you to print directly from your iOS device to a network printer. AirPrint works only with wireless printers that can interact directly with iOS 4.2 devices.

AirPlay lets iPad, iPhone, and iPod Touch devices running iOS 4.2 to stream photos, music, and video directly to the new Apple TV. AirPlay also allows iOS 4.2 devices to stream wirelessly to AirPlay-enabled speakers that are expected to hit the market in the coming months.

Find My iPhone lets you locate a lost device on a map, have it make a sound so you can find it, or even have it display a distress message.

Multitasking enables iPad users to listen to music on Pandora while surfing the Web, checking Twitter, or reading e-mail. Users can also group apps into folders to save screen space and to fit more apps on their devices.

—Ian Paul

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Staff Picks: Enhancing Your Mobile Lifestyle

Samsung Nexus S

The first phone to ship with Android 2.3 ("Gingerbread") and the follow-up to Samsung's Nexus One, the Nexus S (available unlocked for $530 or for $200 with a two-year T-Mobile plan) combines gorgeous hardware (most notably a 4-inch Super AMOLED display and a 5-megapixel camera) with an array of Google apps and useful Android 2.3 enhancements.

Google Maps for Android

An updated version of this app includes 3D building images in major cities and dynamic rendering for smoother results while you're panning and zooming. Most significantly it stores maps of your frequently searched locations on your Android phone so you won't lose access to directions if you hit a dead zone.

ReadySteady

The puck-size ReadySteady accessory ($30) offers a stable base for your pocket camcorder, so you can take stationary shots, tilts, and pans jitter-free. The product comes with a flexible, rodlike camera stand (not shown) that attaches to the base at one end and to the bottom of the pocket camcorder at the other. Then you twist the camcorder/ReadySteady combo to keep the action in view.

TiVo App for iPad

This app for TiVo Premiere turns your iPad into a dedicated display for TiVo's user interface, letting you search, browse, explore, and share your shows without interrupting what's playing on your TV. Using the gesture-based controls, you can navigate TV channels, launch shows, or drag forward and back through a show.

DeLorean Time Machine Hard Drive

Flash Rods' new $250 hard drive contains a 500GB Seagate drive within the chassis of a stainless-steel 1:18 scale model of the much-loved DeLorean time machine from the *Back to the Future* trilogy. The replica DeLorean features a Mr. Fusion energy reactor, working doors, and of course a (nonfunctioning) flux capacitor.

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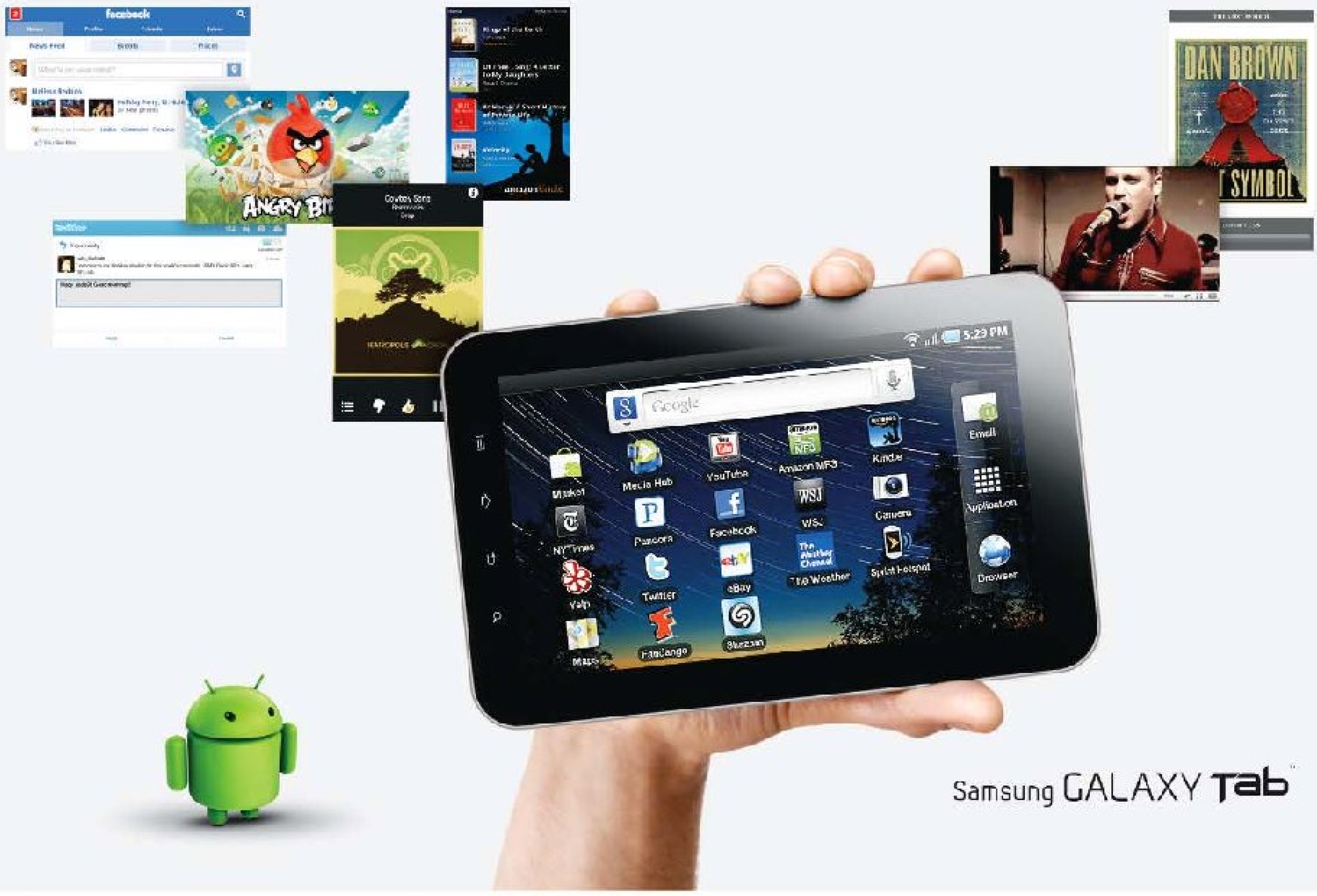

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Tips for Trouble-Free Tech-Product Returns

BY YARDENA ARAR

TECH PRODUCTS CAN make great gifts, for others or for yourself. But if you (or the gift recipient) aren't happy with the item, your options vary depending on the merchant's return policy—fine print that bargain hunters often ignore at their peril.

Returning merchandise purchased online can be a costly hassle. Before you buy, consider these tips for avoiding return problems.

With return policies, just as with the products they cover, advance research can make the difference between a good experience and a disaster. Here are tips for navigating the sometimes rocky waters of returns, along with details on which stores make them easy and which make them tough.

The Good, the Bad, and the Run of the Mill

Costco continues to reign supreme for returnistas, offering full refunds for anything unsatisfactory. The only deadlines apply to electronics—from HDTVs and computers to MP3 players and iPods—which you must return within 90 days. You can return products bought online to a local store, or Costco will send you a prepaid label for return shipping of items small enough to drop off at a UPS location. The company will arrange for pickup of items that a freight service delivered.

Walmart has stricter deadlines (15 days for computers and post-paid cell phones, 30 days for camcorders and cameras, 45 days for computer components and accessories, 90 days for just about everything else). But it has one user-friendly policy: If you lost the receipt, the retailer will still take back the product (within the deadlines) and return cash for items under $25, a gift card for anything pricier, or an even exchange either way. (But if you return more than three items without receipts in a month, a manager must approve the transaction.)

On the other end of the scale for tech returns is Best Buy. Its window for computers (including laptops, netbooks, and tablets) is 14 days; the period begins on the date of purchase in a brick-and-mortar store and the date of delivery for PCs bought online. For all other items, you get 30 days to act (or 45 days—even for computers—if you spend the $2500 a year at Best Buy that qualifies you for the chain's Reward Zone loyalty program at the elite Premiere Silver level).

Restrictions on Returns

When asked about the computer policy, Best Buy spokesperson Erin Bix e-mailed us a statement saying in part: "We carefully manage our inventory and selection so that consumers have access to the latest and greatest, which means in a practical sense needing to reduce the period for returns in some categories like computing." An NBC affiliate in Memphis, though, recently reported that a local store manager said the policy was a response to customer abuse of returns. "They buy them, use them for a week, then return them," store manager Jason Sampson was quoted as saying on NBC12.com.

Buy.com's policy states that it inspects items at the warehouse, and if they aren't in pristine condition with all original packaging, you won't get your money back or a replacement. Its normal window is 45 days from the ship date, so you may have a month to act by the time the product arrives. The policy says that the product doesn't have to be in the company's »

ILLUSTRATION: RICHARD MIA

PCWORLD.COM

Evaluating your needs is key to choosing the right product and avoiding buyer's remorse. For one example—a look at the thought process that goes into buying a laptop—see find.pcworld.com/71104.

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possession within 45 days, but it does have to be with the shipper by then, and you must have obtained a valid Return Merchandise Authorization number. Online merchants typically require you to get an RMA (either by calling in or going online) before sending back products; it allows them to track what's coming back and why.

As for return shipping costs, most vendors aren't generous. Buy.com, for one, will not pay shipping unless the return is the result of its error. Amazon will provide a prepaid shipping label, but it too will deduct shipping costs from your refund unless it was at fault. Some merchants, such as Sixth Avenue Electronics, will not only make you pay for return shipping on discretionary (buyer's remorse) returns, but also for the original shipping costs (even if you took advantage of a free-shipping offer).

Other retailers will give you the option of either paying for shipping yourself or using a prepaid label and deducting the cost from the refund. In my experience, it's difficult to match the bulk rate that sellers get from shippers; I usually opt for the prepaid label.

Don't Touch the Shrinkwrap

Amazon and others will also deduct restocking fees for many items, especially once you've opened the packaging. Some stores make it next to impossible to return CDs, DVDs, and/or Blu-ray discs if the shrinkwrap isn't intact.

It's a good idea to keep all materials—such as the plastic casing, manuals, media, and accessories—together so that you can restore a product to as close to original condition as possible if you decide to send it back.

Restocking fees for tech items typically run about 15 percent of the price. You're most likely to see such fees for discretionary returns at merchants that have the lowest Web prices—this is one way for them to finance the discounts. Keep that fact in mind if you're buying a gift the recipient might not want: They'll be less than happy if your present winds up costing them money.

SKEPTICAL SHOPPER ANNE B. McDONALD

How to Play the Rebate Game—and Win

Rebates aren't always about mailing in paperwork. You may be able to work the rebate system to suit your needs.

THERE'S SOMETHING irresistible about getting money back for something you'd buy anyway. But face facts: Do you always file your rebate paperwork?

Rebates are a win for the manufacturer or store that offers them. First, the offers help bring in business. Second, there is always a percentage of buyers who don't get around to mailing in the documentation. (See yourself here?) Those people are money in the bank for the seller.

Here are some tips on making the tech rebate process work for you.

Instant Gratification

If possible, skip the paper mail-in rebate hassle. Focus on instant rebates, where the amount is deducted from the price you pay. Many online shopping sites make this an easy proposition.

For instance, tech shopping site Newegg.com has an elaborate online Rebate Center (find.pcworld.com/71043) where you can search for products with instant rebates by brand, category, item numbers, and even the amount you want to spend. On the day I searched, it had six pages of instant rebates for GPS devices, ranging from $10 to $95 deducted on products priced from $85 to $500.

Other shopping sites offer instant savings that can't be determined and deducted until you put the item in the shopping cart.

While not instant, Amazon.com's rebate center (find.pcworld.com/71045) lets you apply for paperless rebates and then check their status 24 hours later. If you're not an Amazon shopper, see if your favorite site has something similar.

Some manufacturers, such as Canon and Nikon, hold sales with instant rebates for high-end items like DSLR cameras and lenses. Usually you have to be proactive to find these events (poking around on sites such as Nikonrumors.com is a great way to keep informed). If you can anticipate offers, you can give yourself time to save up to buy a product you really want.

If You Must Mail

Many bargains still require paperwork and stamps. Once you mail the completed forms, however, you can often track the progress of the rebate online. This was the case with my recent purchase of an HTC Droid Incredible from Verizon Wireless. Once my paperwork arrived at the Texas outfit that processes Verizon rebates, I could see the rebate's status, as well as when my $100 rebate debit card was in the mail. And I could check the site to see how much money I had left on the card as I spent the rebate.

AT AMAZON.COM'S REBATE center, you can apply for online rebate offers on the products you purchase.

Big shopping sites also try to smooth the process for you in order to win your business. For instance, at the Newegg center you can search for mail-in rebate offers before you buy, as well as for those on products that you've already purchased. At TigerDirect.com's Rebate Center (find.pcworld.com/71044), you can search by manufacturer, order number, item number, or category.

However, after that—for both of those shopping sites and most others—it's up to you to follow through on the offer.

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TREND MICRO™ TITANIUM™

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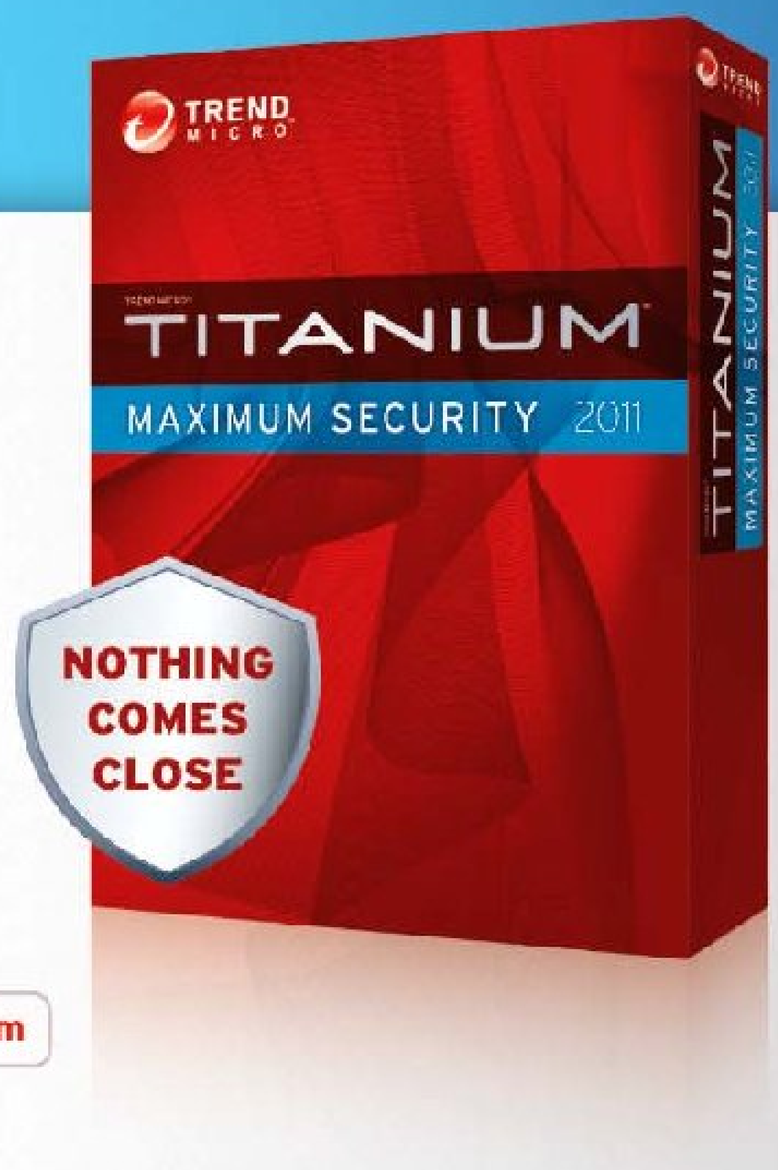

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Consumer Watch

ON YOUR SIDE

MARLA MIYASHIRO

I BOUGHT AN Asus Eee PC Seashell series netbook from Newegg.com. When it arrived, its battery would not hold a charge—and because an internal fan would not come on, the unit overheated. I had not dropped it or mistreated it in any way, so I promptly requested, and got, a Return Merchandise Authorization to have it replaced. I had the unit all packed up and ready to drop off the next day to ship back to Newegg. That night, however, my apartment was broken into and the netbook was stolen. Because the netbook had arrived nonfunctional, I asked Newegg to either refund my money or replace the unit, but they refused. Can you help?

Jen Hawkins, Peoria, Illinois

OYS responds: After we contacted Newegg about Hawkins's issue, a representative found that the company had a record of the RMA for her netbook. Once Hawkins sent Newegg a copy of the police report regarding the theft, the company issued her a $300 gift card.

A laptop's or netbook's convenient size and portability make it easy to steal. You can take a number of steps, however, to protect your PC and data. A veteran San Francisco police officer and the Newegg representative offered the following tips.

When you're on the go, be aware of your surroundings. Don't let your laptop out of your sight in public places such as cafés, conferences, airports, and libraries. Cars are not safe places to keep valuables, even if you put them in the trunk.

At home, if you have a laptop that you were planning on giving away or recycling, keep it out in the open while hiding the good one. A thief will grab the obvious laptop. Some creative laptop hiding places include under a sofa and inside a manila envelope set vertically on a bookshelf. If you prefer to keep your PC easily accessible, use a laptop lock, which is essentially a padlock designed for notebooks.

Password-protect the operating system to make the laptop harder to access if it is lost or stolen. Also, to reduce the risk of a data breach or identity theft, encrypt files and folders containing sensitive information, or use an encrypted hard drive, which is more secure than a standard hard disk. A fully encrypted disk features built-in hardware encryption; to get in and use the files, the user must enable a drive-specific password. If thieves attempt to bypass that protection, all they'll see is unreadable, encrypted data.

Finally, consider installing computer-tracing software, such as Lojack for Laptops. The utility works by periodically connecting to the Internet; if a laptop is reported stolen, the computer sends its location to a recovery service, which then alerts local law enforcement.

Milestone TV Mount Recall

Milestone AV Technologies, in cooperation with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, has recalled about 131,000 flat-screen television wall mounts (the Sanus VisionMount model LF228-B1 and the Simplicity model SLF2). Since the elbow joint components on the wall mount's arm don't fit together properly, the attached TV can tilt and fall when someone adjusts the TV. Consumers should immediately inspect the wall mount and contact Milestone for a free replacement wall mount arm; see inspection instructions at www.milestone.com/recall. For more information, call Milestone toll-free at 877/894-6280.

Senate Passes Bill to Prevent Bait-and-Switch

IN EARLY DECEMBER the U.S. Senate passed a bill designed to protect online shoppers from bait-and-switch scams. The Restore Online Shoppers' Confidence Act targets "posttransaction advertising," which has bilked consumers out of billions of dollars by subscribing them to services without their consent. (For *PCWorld*'s in-depth look at the practice, see find.pcworld.com/69961.)

The legislation follows a Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee probe. "The committee learned that unscrupulous businesses used offers of rebates and rewards as a smoke screen to pick the pockets of millions of online shoppers," said Senator John D. (Jay) Rockefeller (D-West Virginia), who chairs the committee.

The bill outlines several protections. Companies would be required to clearly disclose the terms of their offers, and to obtain billing information—including credit or debit card numbers—directly from consumers. Internet retailers and other commercial sites would be prohibited from transferring a consumer's billing information to posttransaction third-party sellers. And companies that use "negative options" (charging consumers on a recurring basis) would be required to meet minimum disclosure and enrollment requirements so that consumers do not pay fees for goods and services they did not want to buy.

The bill has moved to the House.

—John P. Mello Jr.

ILLUSTRATIONS: HARRY CAMPBELL (LEFT); RICHARD MIA (RIGHT)

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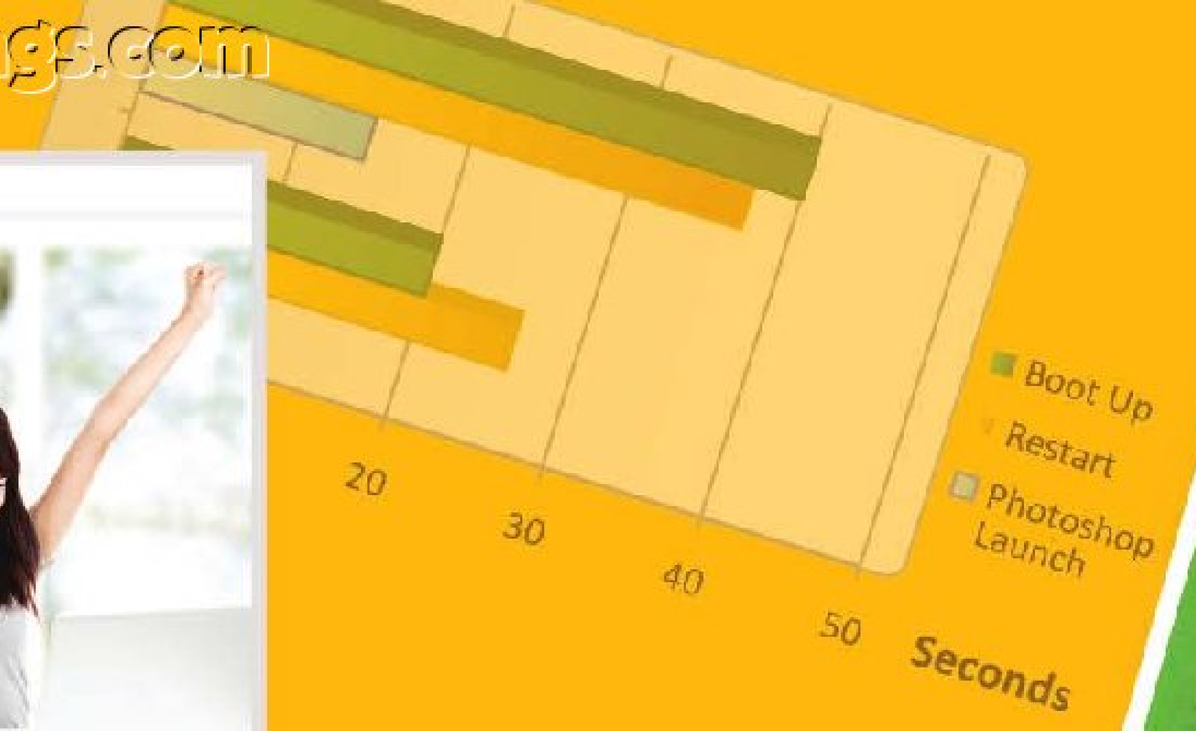

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Business Center

Network-Attached Storage for Any Business

BY JON L. JACOBI

NETWORK-ATTACHED STORAGE can make your business easier to run and more efficient in multiple ways. Let's look at some scenarios for NAS use in businesses of various sizes.

Small or Single-Person Office

A small-office/home-office setup consisting of a few PCs, a multifunction printer or two, and perhaps a wireless, peer-to-peer network is far from optimal for sharing and accessing files. Data is scattered, and accessing it from outside the local network requires a VPN or remote control.

> The right NAS system can simplify your business's data management needs. Here's what to look for.

A NAS box puts important data in one accessible, easy-to-back-up location. You can back up anything you're working on off-site by logging in and uploading the files to the NAS box. Most NAS boxes have on-board backup utilities and USB ports for attaching drives.

If sharing and access matter more than storage, consider a hybrid device such as the PogoPlug Biz that uses local USB storage you may already own and provides an online portal.

Wide-Area Workgroup

If you collaborate with coworkers far away, a NAS box's easy wide-area connectivity can consolidate and centralize your efforts. Like any other administered network-storage resource, your NAS will allow users to access only the contents you approve. You may create private and shared folders, and (in most cases) allocate space to users and folders as you wish.

To handle collaborative work arrangements, simply create folders for each project, give each person access to folders as needed, and give yourself access to all of the folders.

No static IP or domain? Use a service such as DynDNS.org to create a proxy domain, and then point it to your NAS box.

Using your main server to store shared databases is overkill, with high initial and ongoing costs. A NAS box can manage the database serving so the main server can focus on handling DHCP, maintaining the domain and users, serving applications, and dealing with other small-business network tasks.

A NAS box is self-sufficient, redundant, and task-specific. But some programs insist that their database reside on a local PC, and others require you to install a traffic-cop program for multiple users. For these programs, you need a NAS box that uses Windows Home Server, such as the HP MediaSmart EX495.

The Large Office

In a large office, NAS performs well as a workgroup storage and backup device. NAS is also ideal for sharing printers via USB ports. Some boxes integrate additional peripherals sharable over the Internet via the Internet Small Computer System Interface (iSCSI), an IP-based protocol for data transfer. »

ILLUSTRATION: ADAM McCAULEY

PCWORLD.COM

For more information on network-attached storage, see "What NAS Can Do for the Small Business" (find.pcworld.com/71123) and "Top Network-Attached Storage Devices" (find.pcworld.com/71124).

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Business Center

Serving programs from a NAS box is no walk in the park. To run a Windows app, you'll need a Windows Home Server box. For a Linux app, use a Linux-based box that allows low-level access.

Buying Tips

When buying NAS hardware, focus on redundancy, capacity, and speed. Don't buy a single-drive NAS box: You'll need at least a two-drive box for mirroring one drive on the other (RAID 1) so you won't lose access when one drive fails.

THE QNAP TS-259 Pro Turbo NAS box offers seamless online Amazon S3 network backup.

NAS capacity is the number of drives on board (normally between two and five) times the size of the drives, divided by the RAID mode in use. Single-drive capacity tops out at 2TB, so a high-end SOHO unit offers up to 10TB of storage.

Speed depends on the drives, the CPU speed, and the ethernet connection (usually speedy gigabit ethernet today).

Better boxes have multiple ethernet connections. In some cases, this is for failover—the option for a backup connection to carry on if the primary one fails—via Multiple Path I/O, or MPIO.

More-advanced boxes increase their speed via Multiple Connections per Session, which uses both connections for data transfer. The speed and traffic on your local network may be limiting factors, so don't overbuy hardware.

NET WORK TONY BRADLEY

Drive Traffic With Facebook Deals

FACEBOOK IS a tremendous marketing tool. Nothing sells like word-of-mouth recommendations from family and friends, and Facebook gives users a forum for posting status updates that offer feedback on products and services.

A Facebook Deals campaign can draw customers and get them to come back.

Location-based check-in with Facebook Places takes the marketing a step further. It lets users share their current location and activities with their network of pals.

You can use Facebook Deals to attract customers and to reward them for checking in—promoting your business on their social network in the process.

Today 200 million active Facebook mobile users are out and about, and Facebook Deals are pushed to their mobile phones to let them know what bargains are available in the area. The Facebook apps for iPhone, Android, and BlackBerry enable Facebook Places check-ins, but Windows Phone 7 does not yet have the feature.

Create a Deal

To take advantage of Facebook Deals, you first need to establish or claim ownership of the Facebook Place for your business. Once you've done that, setting up a Facebook Deals marketing campaign is simple.

THERE ARE FOUR types of Facebook deals—Individual, Friend, Loyalty, and Charity—each with its own system of rewards.

The Facebook Places Get Started page walks you through the process of putting your Place to work. Click the *Create Deal* button to start assembling your campaign.

Each campaign has unique benefits and can help drive traffic for your business in different ways, depending on your goals.

Individual deals are simply Facebook Deals that any person can claim to receive a discount or reward for checking in on Facebook Places. Friend deals encourage more traffic by providing an incentive for customers to come in groups. Loyalty deals provide rewards to repeat customers. And Charity deals foster an impression of goodwill and community giving.

Set Some Limits

After creating the ad, you need to define when and how often a customer can claim the deal. Fill in starting and ending dates and times for pushing the Facebook Deal to customers. You may also wish to specify a maximum number of times that customers can claim the deal at all.

Then click *Create Deal* to submit your Facebook Deals ad campaign to Facebook for approval. Create your Deal at least 48 hours before you plan to start the promotion, to give Facebook time to vet the campaign and confirm that your Facebook Deals ads are both reasonable and legal.

Remember that you are creating ad copy for viewing on a smartphone. Use simple, straightforward offers, such as "Buy one, get one free." Make sure that you have the inventory or personnel necessary to meet demand and fulfill Facebook Deals claims. And finally, don't overdo the offer. The point of the incentive is to attract customers, not to bankrupt your business or establish a permanent discount.

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TECH AUDIT

ELSA WENZEL

Thin Clients: Because Sometimes Full-Blown PCs Are Overkill

DO YOU REALLY want to manage a fleet of expensive PCs that require ongoing maintenance and troubleshooting? A growing number of businesses are exploring an alternative to desktops and laptops that can reduce associated hassles and expense. Thin clients give users the familiar experience of working at a computer, but the machines are limited to accessing applications on a server.

PANO LOGIC ZERO-CLIENT devices offer a streamlined approach to computing.

As small as a hardcover book, thin clients carry ports for peripherals and are powered by lightweight processors and applications (or none at all). The user's monitor and keyboard plug in to the little box, but they reach and control a remote computer on a server.

The market for thin clients has been growing. Some 7.4 million units will sell in 2014, up from 3.7 million in 2010, IDC analysts say.

A thin client generally houses a small CPU whose software interacts with a remote desktop. A "zero client," like the one from Pano Logic, convinces the virtual machine in a data center that the device is local, eliminating the need for a local processor or software.

According to Pano Logic, a device isn't a zero client if it has a processor, an OS, and drivers. However, market leader Wyse sells zero clients with software that it says can help them adapt to future changes in network protocols and security.

Benefits

Replacing desktop PCs can demand a huge initial effort from an IT department. But once set up, thin clients and virtual desktops can reduce operating expenses by 40 percent, according to Wyse.

With thin clients, a company can focus on running servers, outsourcing any heavy lifting to a cloud service.

> Ultraslim terminals can reduce the costs and work involved in managing desktop systems.

Thin clients are solid-state. If they fail, user data isn't lost: It lives on the server. Thin clients reduce downtime per user by 79 percent, according to Gartner research.

Since each workstation accesses the same centralized applications, a worker can log in at any terminal rather than being tied to a specific desk. Some thin clients also offer smartphone companion tools for reaching remote virtual desktops.

A typical thin client demands 3 watts versus the 14 watts that an efficient PC requires. Energy costs for a zero client can be 88 percent less than those for a desktop PC, according to Pano Logic.

Drawbacks

A single point of failure on the central system can put all users out of luck, so a reliable server redundancy plan is essential.

Also, a thin-client arrangement is less than ideal if you need to work regularly with bandwidth-intensive video, voice, and graphics.

To decide whether thin clients make sense for your workplace, compare the costs of hardware and software licenses and centralized maintenance against what you spend on infrastructure now.

CASE STUDY

Zero Clients Help Brewer to Produce More Beer

BOULEVARD BREWING COMPANY of Kansas City, Missouri, is the ninth-largest craft brewery in the United States, producing 148,000 barrels of beer a year. When it built a new brew house several years ago, it established a computer system to manage the brewing process. But when the workstations crashed, the company lost costly beer ingredients to spoilage—as much as $100,000 worth overall.

To address the problems, Boulevard replaced desktop workstations with Pano Logic zero clients, some of them protected within waterproof cabinets and hooked up to touchscreen monitors.

STAFFERS USE ZERO clients on a local network to control most aspects of brewing.

Each $320 Pano Device can connect with dual monitors, a keyboard, a mouse, and other peripherals, linking users to the computer on a server. The brewery's data center uses VMware ESX hosts to run virtual machines. Having zero clients connected to the company network enables employees to monitor and control nearly every aspect of brewing, whether they are in the brew house or elsewhere on company property, without needing to race from one workstation to another. The brewery no longer has to worry about computers locking up and leaving ingredients to sour. The new system has also saved on equipment costs.

—Boulevard Brewing Company

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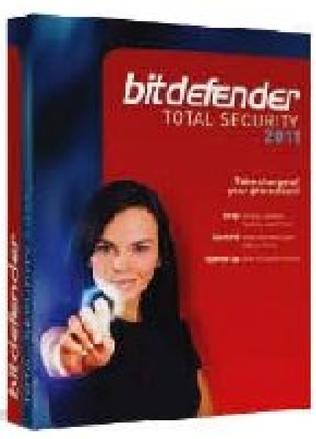

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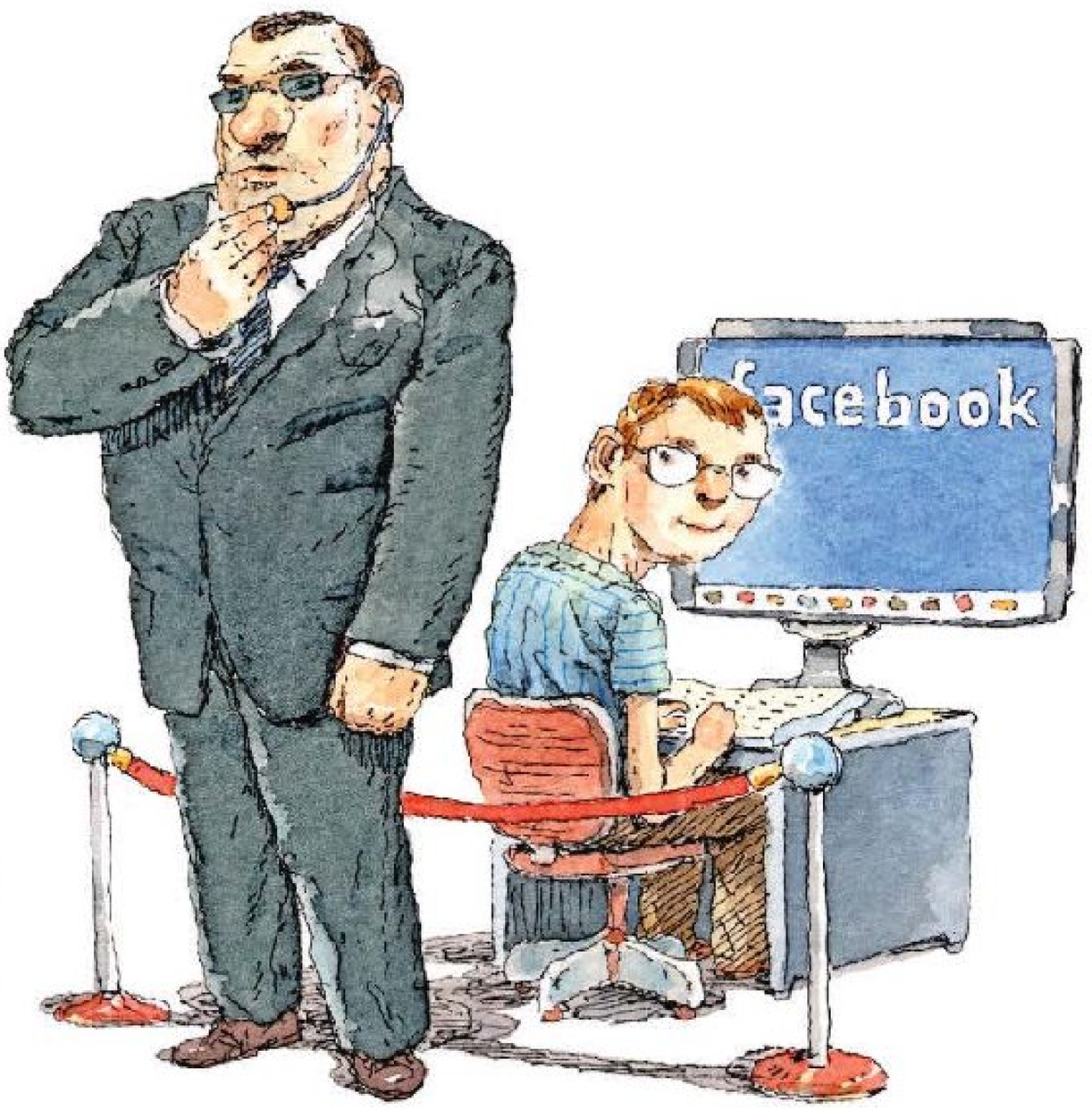
Security Alert

The Paranoid's Guide to Facebook

BY LOGAN KUGLER



OVER HALF A billion people use Facebook. It's the largest phenomenon of human connection in history, not to mention the biggest thing on the Web. But even though we love using Facebook and other social networks, we hate the privacy and security drawbacks.

Here are some steps that you can take to keep your information private on Facebook.

> Facebook knows who your friends are, what you like, where you live, and what you buy. Our advice will help you secure your personal information.

Five Steps to Privacy

1 Disable Facebook Places: Using Facebook Places has benefits. But when you broadcast your location, you expose vulnerabilities, inviting an ill-intentioned person to swoop in.

If you use Facebook Places, note that the defaults let "Everyone" see your profile—which means everyone on the Internet. Go to the *Account* tab and select *Privacy Settings*. From there, indicate who should and shouldn't see your profile, and how much others may see when you upload comments and images.

To disable Facebook Places entirely, first log in to Facebook and pick *Privacy Settings* from the Account drop-down menu. Click *Customize settings*. The last line under 'Things I share' deals with Facebook Places; click *Edit* and select *Disable*. To stop friends from broadcasting your location, scroll to 'Things others share'; for the bottom item, click *Edit* and select *Disable*.

2 Control items posted to your profile: Even if you delete your Facebook account (see the final tip), the photos and details you shared with friends can still lurk on Facebook or the Internet at large. When in doubt, don't post it—but if you do, control who sees your items by using the lock feature.

Before clicking Share, click the drop-down menu above and select who can see the post: Everyone, Friends of Friends, Friends Only, or Customize. The last setting will let you block individual friends irrespective of your general choice.

3 Hide your app activity: Some games on Facebook reward players for recruiting friends. And some games and apps post messages to your wall so friends see what you've been up to (when you first run the app, you agree to the terms and conditions that allow it to do this). The posts can be a nuisance to your friends. Besides, do you really want them to know that you've been playing FarmVille all day?

Head to the Privacy Settings page. At the bottom left, under 'Applications and websites', select *Edit Your Settings*. Below 'Game and application activity', select *Custom* from the drop-down menu. Choose *Only Me* in the dialog box.

4 Disable Facebook apps: All Facebook apps can access your profile information. Facebook's policy is that app developers cannot use personal data off-site and may access only sufficient data to enable the app to run, or to "enrich" your experience. But once an app has access to personal information, it's up to the developer to keep the info safe.

If you don't like that policy, block apps. Select *Privacy Settings* under Account, and click *Edit your settings* under 'Applications and websites'. Below 'Applications you use', select *Turn off all platform applications.* In the alert box, choose »

ILLUSTRATION: JOHN CUNEO

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Reactions to Facebook Messages are mixed, with privacy concerns yet again coming to the fore. But the new e-mail service may help in the fight against online fraud. Read more at find.pcworld.com/71055.

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Security Alert

Select all and click *Turn Off Platform*.

You may have to wait a few minutes while the new settings activate; Facebook needs time to disable app access.

5 Control what friends reveal: Your friends have access to your profile. They can repost your wall items to their profiles, or share the info, without your knowledge. They may also be using apps that access their friend lists.

Click *Privacy Settings* under Account. Go to 'Applications and websites', and click *Edit your settings* and *Info accessible through your friends*. Deselect items to share when your friends allow apps to access your profile; for full privacy, deselect everything (recommended).

The Last Resort: Deletion

Eliminating your Facebook account may be worthwhile if you no longer find it useful. But to deep-six it, you have to dig: From the Account Settings page, you can only deactivate your account, which makes it merely dormant—your profile still exists, in hibernation.

If you want to obliterate the account, the process takes 14 days, and once it's initiated you cannot use your account. The link to permanently delete your account is buried in Facebook's Help pages, at find.pcworld.com/71057. Click *Submit,* fill out the form, and click *OK*. Then leave the site, never to return.

ERADICATING YOUR FACEBOOK account is fairly simple—once you find the way to do so.

BUGS & FIXES

JAMES MULROY

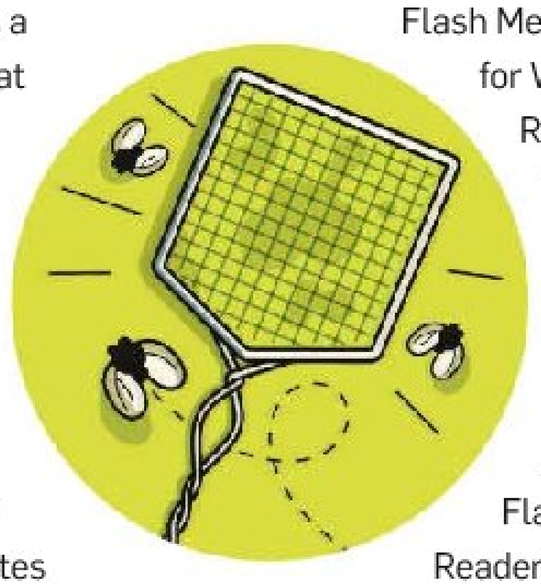
Patches for Rich-Text E-Mail, Acrobat Holes

Plus: Apple's updates for Mac OS X and iOS fix a wide range of security issues.

IN NOVEMBER 2010, both Microsoft and Adobe had it fairly easy, with minimal security threats and updates. The Patch Tuesday update that Microsoft released on November 9 was one of the company's smallest patch collections for the year.

Rich Text Format Flaw

The Patch Tuesday release brought only one update rated as critical; Microsoft rated the other two as important. The critical update, MS10-087, addresses a flaw that could affect you if you opened or previewed a specially crafted Rich Text Format e-mail. RTF is a Microsoft-developed format that lets you use multiple fonts, text sizes, and colors in e-mail messages. If you open an RTF e-mail that has malicious code, the attacker could gain the same rights on your PC as a local user.



The two important updates correct vulnerabilities in Microsoft Office and in the Forefront Unified Access Gateway, which permits secure remote access to corporate networks for personnel. The most dangerous of these vulnerabilities could allow remote execution and/or elevated privileges for the attacker.

The Patch Tuesday fixes apply to all supported editions of Office XP and newer for Windows; PowerPoint 2002 and 2003; Office 2004 for Mac; PowerPoint Viewer 2007 Service Pack 2; and Forefront Unified Access Gateway 2010.

As usual, you should install these patches as soon as possible through Windows Update. To learn more about each fix, as well as to download them manually, visit find.pcworld.com/71109.

Adobe Reader, Flash Updates

Recently Adobe released three critical security updates for its Adobe Flash Player, Flash Media Server, and Adobe Reader and Acrobat software products.

Vulnerabilities in Adobe Flash Player, Reader, and Acrobat could cause the apps to crash, and could allow an attacker to take control of your computer. Meanwhile, a bug hidden in Flash Media Server could permit an attacker to run malicious code on an affected system.

The updates affect Adobe Flash Player 10.1.85.3 and earlier for Windows, Mac, Linux, and Solaris, plus Flash Player 10.1.95.1 for Android. Also affected are Flash Media Server 4.0 and earlier for Windows and Linux; Reader 9.4 and earlier for Windows, Mac, and Unix; and Acrobat 9.4 and earlier 9.*x* versions for Windows and Mac.

Be sure to grab the latest editions of Adobe Flash Player, Media Server, Reader, and Acrobat, using automatic update checks. Visit find.pcworld.com/71107 for the latest version of Flash Player, and go to find.pcworld.com/71108 for Flash Media Server updates. For Reader and Acrobat, select *Check for Updates* from the Help menu to get the most recent versions.

Apple's Bumper Crop of Fixes

Apple has released updates that apply to Mac OS X, as well as to iOS for iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch. The Mac OS X 10.6.5 update addresses over 130 vulnerabilities, 55 of which involve the bundled version of Adobe Flash Player. See find.pcworld.com/71110 for more information about the patch.

The iOS 4.2.1 update also comes packed with plenty of security fixes—and it offers several new features for iPad owners. Browse to find.pcworld.com/71111 to learn more about iOS 4.2.1, and be sure to snag both Apple updates.

ILLUSTRATION: HARRY CAMPBELL

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Does Your Child Have a Secret Online Life?

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Security Alert

IE 9 to Let Users Block Tracking

THE NEXT VERSION of Internet Explorer will let users turn on "tracking protection," a new mechanism that will block specified third-party sites from tracking users, Microsoft says.

The IE 9 announcement came as the U.S. Federal Trade Commission proposed that consumers be allowed to subscribe to a "do not track" system similar to the "do not call" lists that block telemarketers (see page 16).

In IE 9, users can turn the feature on and then choose a list of sites to block. Anyone—including individuals, companies, and consumer-protection groups—can make lists, and users can subscribe to as many as they please. List authors can update lists; the updates will automatically push out to subscribers, as IE 9 will check for updates once a week. The feature will not block Flash cookies.

Some users may be surprised by the results, however: Sites that users block from tracking them will also be prohibited from displaying certain content. Websites will be able to detect when visitors are using the list; the sites will therefore know that some page elements may be blocked for the visitor. For instance, a medical-imaging site that uses a third party to deliver an image may want to alert visitors that they are not seeing the complete image because the third-party site is blocked.

The new tracking protection feature will be available in the Internet Explorer 9 release candidate early next year.

—Nancy Gohring

PRIVACY WATCH

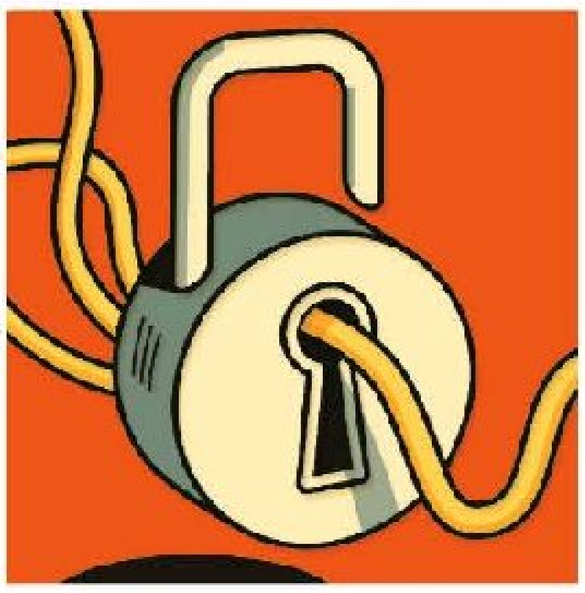
Rogue Sites Can Track Your Web History

A number of big sites may be monitoring your browsing trail. Find out how you can keep your browsing habits private.

BE CAREFUL THE next time you visit some of the Web's biggest news, porn, and torrent sites: They could be peeking at your browser history. Researchers at the University of California, San Diego have found that 485 of the world's 50,000 most popular sites now have a way to read a browser's Web history. Called *history sniffing*, the tactic uses a combination of Web technologies; read the study at find.pcworld.com/71094.

Hijacking Your History

CSS (Cascading Style Sheets), a commonly used Web development language, controls many elements of a page's layout. One CSS item, the "a:visited" property, displays visited Web links in a different color (typically purple) from links you haven't visited (usually blue). A browser stores this property so that it can display the right color for every link you see.



In order to find out where you've been, history hijackers plant on their Web pages some invisible links to third-party sites such as Amazon, Facebook, and Twitter. Then the spies use a snippet of JavaScript code to learn from your browser what color the hidden links should have. After that, it's pretty simple to generate a list of sites your browser has visited and a list of sites it hasn't.

Although the researchers discovered 485 sites that exploit the history-sniffing flaw, only 46 of the sites actively download browser histories. The researchers also found that another 17 sites (for a total of 63) transfer users' browsing histories to their network; however, the group couldn't confirm whether the sites were using the information collected. The majority of sites, the researchers say, are simply inspecting the style properties. About 18 of the 46 offending sites are known to be using the exploit to analyze users' past visits to more than 220 sites.

History sniffing isn't new, but this study shows how prevalent it has become. The researchers say that some analytics companies, such as Beencounter and Tealium, offer history-sniffing services to clients.

Despite fears that parties could build a profile about you based on your browsing history and other information, history sniffing has more-benign uses that can make browsing better, some Web developers argue. Blogger and developer Niall Kennedy notes that history sniffing can see which social networks you visit (find.pcworld.com/71095) and then prompt a site to show you "share" or "like" buttons only for them. Other uses include displaying your favorite blog aggregator instead of showing every RSS-reader link. Or when you click a 'show map' link, the site could display just the map services you tend to use.

Simple Safeguards

If you don't want your history sniffed, you can take several steps. Chrome, Firefox, and Safari can defend against the tactic. Internet Explorer may stop it if you use private browsing. You could also use the Firefox add-on NoScript (find.pcworld.com/71096), which prevents sites from running JavaScript in the browser. And Firefox users can disable CSS visited links by modifying that browser's about:config file (find.pcworld.com/71097).

—Ian Paul

ILLUSTRATIONS: OTTO STEININGER (LEFT); HARRY CAMPBELL (RIGHT)

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Reviews & Rankings

NEW STREAMER BOXES include (clockwise from bottom left) the Apple TV, D-Link Boxee Box, WD TV Live Hub, Roku XDS, and Logitech Revue.

Media Streamers Jump Front and Center

Explosive growth in set-top boxes is making media streaming ubiquitous—and making the choice of streamer more complicated.

SO MUCH MEDIA, so many ways to watch it on an HDTV. That's the quick take on the streaming-media landscape following a year of explosive growth in set-top boxes—meaning almost any connected device that delivers video, music, and still images to your set. New, high-profile streamers from Apple, D-Link, Logitech, Roku, and Western Digital show the category maturing.

The media sources are continually expanding, and vary depending on which box you buy. Media could come from a free or commercial Internet service (Amazon, Apple TV, Netflix, Vudu, YouTube, or any network-TV site), or it could reside on a drive connected to the box or shared over your local area network. Then there are all the TV shows and movies you've recorded with a digital video recorder.

The set-top boxes we've seen can deliver media from at least some of the above sources, but at this writing none can do it all—either because that's how they were designed, or because Hollywood won't let them.

Of the media streamers we looked at, the most versatile and capable were the Logitech Revue with Google TV and the Boxee Box by D-Link—but some network-TV sites prevent them from showing content, and the devices have some glitches.

Roku's products are great for streaming media from literally dozens of sites and services, but they don't support streaming from your PC or networked drive. Boxes from little-known vendors (Cirago and Uebo, for example) do support streaming of locally stored

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media, but they lack built-in software for Netflix or other commercial services.

Most media streamers support 720p HDTV, via either a component-video or an HDMI hookup. But not all can deliver 1080p content. Some have built-in storage, allowing them to double as media servers; but USB ports for attaching drives are more common.

Some connect to your network via ethernet; others also have built-in Wi-Fi support, although at this writing that support is mostly for 802.11n on the 2.4GHz band. Because most notebooks and other devices also use this band, interference may occur. Of the streamers we looked at, only Roku's high-end version supports streaming by Wi-Fi over the less-crowded 5GHz band.

Look into wired network options for hooking up media streamers—such as HomePlug AV powerline or the newer MoCA (Multimedia over Coax Alliance) products that use your home's cable TV wiring—as they generally are more reliable, especially for video.

Since these boxes are so diverse, however, your very first consideration in shopping should be what media sources you want the box to stream—and whether your other entertainment-center components, such as your HDTV, game console, or Blu-ray player, can also deliver them. (There's little point in buying a box that duplicates what you already have.)

Pricing is all over the map, but usually falls in the $100 to $200 range, depending on features; the $300 Logitech Revue is the priciest here, but it has a full-blown keyboard and Web browser.

Although these products show great promise in letting you enjoy media on your TV, the gold-rush mentality of vendors means that many of the devices have software requiring firmware updates. And as consumer electronics go, the boxes can be geeky. But they are rapidly opening up a whole new frontier in home entertainment that may make them well worth the trouble.

PC WORLD TOP 5 MEDIA STREAMERS

	MODEL	Rating	Features
1	Roku XDS (2100X) **$100** find.pcworld.com/71077	★★★★½ VERY GOOD	• Amazon Video on Demand • Flickr • Hulu Plus • Netflix • Pandora • Vimeo
	▸ The Roku XDS lets you play a lot of Internet media easily; however, it can't stream media from your local network.		
2	Western Digital WD TV Live Hub **$200** find.pcworld.com/71079	★★★½ VERY GOOD	• Blockbuster On Demand • Facebook • Flickr • Netflix • Pandora • YouTube
	▸ Since the WD TV Live Hub doubles as a media server, it's a good choice for streaming media to and from multiple locations.		
3	Logitech Revue **$300** find.pcworld.com/71080	★★★½ VERY GOOD	• Napster • Netflix • Pandora • Twitter • Web browser
	▸ Logitech's Revue brings Google search and Web browsing to your HDTV, but it's also underpowered and pricey.		
4	D-Link Boxee Box **$199** find.pcworld.com/71078	★★★½ VERY GOOD	• Current TV • Flickr • MLB.TV • Vudu • Web browser
	▸ The stylish Boxee Box makes video from diverse sources accessible, and it will be even better when some bugs are fixed.		
5	Apple TV (2nd gen., late 2010) **$99** find.pcworld.com/71081	★★★½ VERY GOOD	• Apple AirPlay • Apple iTunes • Flickr • Netflix • YouTube
	▸ This tiny box is a great deal if you have an HDTV and a lot of iTunes purchases, but it feels as if a few pieces are still missing.		

CHART NOTE: Ratings are as of 12/3/10.

Roku XDS

The new, $100 Roku XDS is smaller than its predecessor and sports added features such as 1080p support, a USB port for playing con- »

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tent from a connected flash or hard drive, dual-band Wi-Fi, and an improved remote. For newcomers to streaming media, it's great, but owners of the earlier version can pass.

The Roku XDS is a small box that connects to your home network and your TV and streams some 100 channels of Internet content, including the Amazon, Hulu Plus, and Netflix on-demand video services; Major League Baseball broadcasts; Internet radio services; and photo-sharing sites.

But it still can't stream media from within your

THE ROKU XDS is good for Internet streaming, but not for pulling up content from your network.

LAN, and the XDS's new support for playback of media on a connected USB drive is extremely limited.

If Internet content (rather than your own material) is your priority, then the Roku XDS is a great choice.

WD TV Live Hub

Western Digital's WD TV Live Hub offers a 1TB internal hard drive (it can do both network storage and media serving), support for major Web streaming media services, a major overhaul of WD's user interface, and improved search and filtering features.

While a tad pricey at $200, its strong feature set and first-rate user interface should appeal to people who have a lot of their own high-def media to stream to multiple rooms—and who also want easy access to Web services.

The WD TV Live Hub has a bigger footprint than its predecessors, but is also much thinner, and it provides the same outputs: HDMI, component and composite video, and digital audio, plus a USB port for hooking up a flash or external hard drive, and a gigabit ethernet port to put the Live Hub on your home network. It lacks integrated Wi-Fi.

In my tests, I was able to access media server content on various devices. But the Hub did not see any of my shared network drives, and I never determined why.

Overall, the WD TV Live Hub is a versatile and mostly user-friendly media streamer and storage device.

Logitech Revue

The $300 Logitech Revue with Google TV is nothing if not ambitious. With a keyboard that incorporates a universal remote and mouse functions, this Android-based set-top box brings search capabilities and an honest-to-goodness Web browser to your TV, along with solid media playback and streaming services. An optional USB video camera lets the Revue make your set a video-chat monitor.

THE WD TV Live Hub doubles as a media server, so it can distribute content to multiple locations.

It's not perfect. Certain network-TV sites block its Chrome browser from playing their content, its Amazon on-demand app doesn't yet support high-def streaming, and, oddly, its searches are sometimes confusing.

But the Revue was exceptionally easy to get up and running. (It uses HDMI connections; one cable comes with it.) You also must connect the Revue box to your home network, via either the built-in Wi-Fi or ethernet.

Google's Chrome Web browser appears in the app list. Launching it brings up Google's search screen. A picture-in-picture button lets you view TV in a small window as you surf.

During tests, video varied in quality. ABC and CBS video didn't play at all. NBC video displayed artifacts when enlarged to an HDTV screen's size.

The built-in YouTube interface worked well.

The videoconferencing app, Logitech Vid, lets you make video calls to anyone else with the Revue or with Vid installed on a PC or Mac. (The add-on camera is $150.)

I liked a lot about the Revue, but if you're hoping for a box that will let you abandon your existing cable or satellite service, it will disappoint. At $300, its search and TV-content limitations are serious flaws.

D-Link Boxee Box

The $199 Boxee Box gets points for design: It's a shiny black polyhedron, a cube with a corner lopped off.

Once hooked up, the box works much as other set-top streamers do. It offers an impressive range of Web video, both free and paid; a slick, videocentric user interface; and a candy-bar-style remote.

Unfortunately, the Boxee Box has problems I've seen on rivals. It allows Web-based streaming, but some TV networks block their video. And the software didn't always feel fully baked: The unit »

THE LOGITECH REVUE lets you browse the Web on your TV, and it has a videoconferencing option (at extra cost).

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froze and crashed occasionally. Several key services are not yet available; the makers of the Boxee software say that it will have Hulu, Netflix, and Vudu by early 2011.

While the Boxee Box minimizes the geek factor, it could still use a full user manual. Setup is easy, though: Once you hook it up and power it on, you're directed to adjust the display to fit your TV's screen and create a Boxee account. That account will store your information, and you can link your account to Facebook for video sharing.

The Boxee home screen has a menu of six icons and a horizontally scrollable selection of screenshots from featured content (three at a time). The menu items are Friends (shared Facebook videos), Watch Later (for items you've tagged while browsing content libraries), Shows (TV programs), Movies, Apps, and Files.

You'll find most current Web content and services under Apps, including Flickr, Pandora, and YouTube, and sites for news and music. Boxee's creators call them apps because they've been optimized for Boxee.

Content accessed through Boxee apps looked fine when it played, but sometimes a crash and reboot occurred.

THE BOXEE BOX is uniquely stylish and can pull in lots of Net content, but it has a few bugs.

The software had glitches.

Since the Boxee Box remote has no mouse or touchpad, selecting something with the cursor is awkward.

Overall, the Boxee Box promises to be a great addition to a connected home—once all of the premium services arrive and the bugs are fixed.

If you want a full-blown Web browser that you can access while watching TV, you might prefer to pay an extra $100 for the Logitech/Google device.

But for user-friendly access to a wide selection of paid and free content, both on the Web and within your own local-area network, a fully-baked Boxee Box may well be the polyhedron you've been waiting for.

—Yardena Arar

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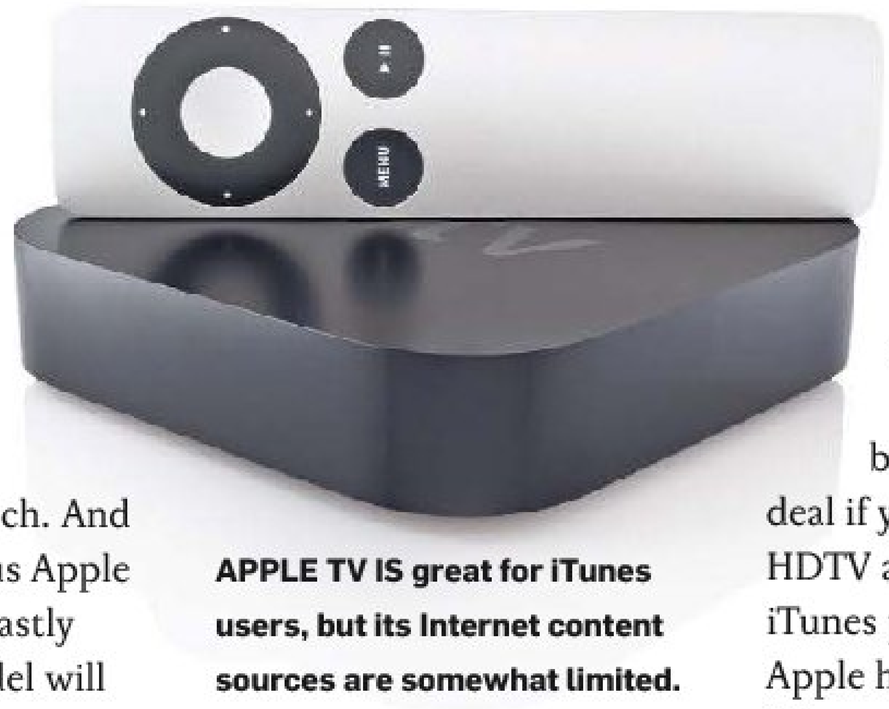
Apple TV

Editor's note: *This review was written by* Macworld. *On our chart, this unit's relatively limited selection of Internet sources kept it from ranking higher.*

In the second-generation Apple TV, Apple has dramatically changed the device's technology. But until the unit becomes more flexible, it's still a work in progress.

This new black box, one-fourth the size of the original Apple TV, runs a version of iOS and carries the same Apple A4 processor that drives the iPad. It relies on solid-state storage rather than on a moving hard drive, sips power, and runs cool to the touch. And whereas the previous Apple TV cost $229, this vastly more advanced model will cost you just $99.



APPLE TV IS great for iTunes users, but its Internet content sources are somewhat limited.

The Apple TV is 3.9 inches square by 0.9 inches high, and weighs 0.6 pounds—it's really small. On the back you'll find a plug for the included power cord, an HDMI port capable of carrying HD video and 5.1-channel digital audio to your TV set, an optical digital audio port for connecting directly to a surround-sound audio system, a 10/100Base-T ethernet port (in case you prefer wired networking to the Apple TV's built-in Wi-Fi), and a micro-USB port that Apple says is reserved for service and support. You'll need to supply your own HDMI cable—Apple doesn't provide one. And if your HDTV has support only for component inputs, and not HDMI, you're out of luck.

But at $99, this tiny box is a remarkable deal if you have both an HDTV and an investment in iTunes purchases. Now that Apple has released iOS 4.2, iPhone and iPad users will likely find its AirPlay wireless streaming feature a great way to move the content on their devices to a big screen. And if you're a Netflix subscriber as well, the product is right in your wheelhouse. But the Apple TV is limited to only a few Internet-based content sources.

—Jason Snell and Jonathan Seff

MORE ONLINE

For complete reviews and test reports of the products we tested for this story, go online to find.pcworld.com/71105.

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Color Tablet Optimized for Reading

THE NOOKCOLOR delivers a superbly integrated, largely satisfying, and (at present) unique e-reading experience. And it has the potential to deliver far more as Barnes & Noble's library of periodicals and children's books grows.

A 7-inch capacitive touchscreen dominates the front surface, with Android 2.1 and a Texas Instruments OMAP3 series processor inside. The MicroSDHC card slot can accommodate 32GB of storage, and the e-reader also supplies 8GB of user-accessible on-board storage.

The 8.1-by-5.0-by-0.5-inch device is solidly built, with well-formed buttons, a dark slate-colored bezel, and a black, rubberized back. It weighs 15.8 ounces.

The NookColor's display employs an in-plane switching (IPS) panel, just as the iPad does, for a wider viewing angle and better color reproduction than standard LCD screens provide. Its 1024-by-600-pixel display supports 16 million colors. In use, letters were very readable.

Special lamination and an optical bonding process reduce glare impressively. The viewing angle was better than on other tablets, too.

Though the NookColor runs Android 2.1 underneath, the e-reader's software skin looks and behaves nothing like stock Android. The interface makes sense for reading, offering visual organization that complements the navigation and the content.

THE NOOKCOLOR Library screen links to books and periodicals.

Navigating the NookColor relies heavily on tapping in specific spots of the device.

Most books are displayed only in portrait view; but Web pages, PDFs, and other files can appear in portrait or landscape orientation.

Tapping at the bottom of the book screen activates the in-book quick-nav bar. From here you can access the contents, search for a passage of text, share material, change the text display options, and adjust the brightness. It also brings up a progress bar that shows where you are in the book.

The numerous text options include six choices each for text size, fonts, spacing, and background color.

The NookColor does have room for improvement. My biggest gripe involves the unit's micro-USB port. You can give the 4000mAH battery a rapid charge, but only by using the included charger and cable. If you use any other cable, you can only transfer data with it. I'd also like to see a higher pixel depth, so the text quality comes closer to matching that of Apple's iPhone 4.

The revamped Nook store is light-years better than before, and it bests its rivals with a graphical approach and easy searching. But I wish that obtaining search results, navigating while inside the shop, and moving among selections proceeded more smoothly.

The NookColor makes a strong case for color-capable e-readers, but I wouldn't recommend it if you plan to use it primarily outdoors in direct sunlight. For anyone else, the $249 NookColor is a worthy contender that combines the readability of E-Ink-based e-readers with the speed, customization, and graphical advantages of LCD-based e-reading apps on touchscreen devices.

—Melissa J. Perenson

★★★★☆ **VERY GOOD**

NookColor | Barnes & Noble

Premium e-reader has an elegant interface and a low-glare LCD.

Street: $249

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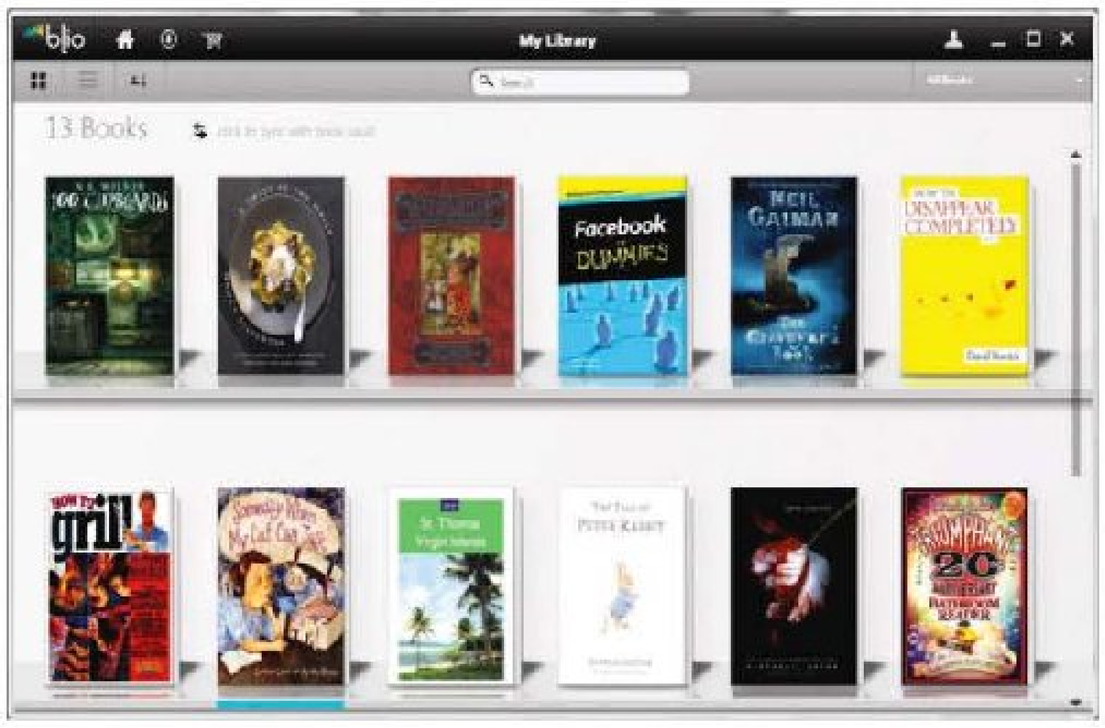

BLIO E-READER SOFTWARE nicely re-creates graphics-heavy texts.

Blio Redefines E-Books

INSTEAD OF focusing on new hardware, K-NFB Reading Technology has created PC software that reproduces the graphic elements of traditional printed books and effortlessly delivers related content such as multimedia.

Blio eReader software (find.pcworld.com/71093) is available as a free download for PCs, with Android, iOS, and Silverlight versions promised down the line. In my tests, Blio offered an intriguing alternative to standard e-book readers for handling complex book content.

As promising as Blio is, however, your content remains locked to your PC, at least until the Android and iOS versions arrive.

—Yardena Arar

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Nowadays everything is available digitally – movies, music, games, books and documents. With the shift to high-definition video and lossless audio formats, file sizes are increasing beyond the storage capacities of conventional recordable media – not to mention recordable media is slow. USB 2.0 paired with flash memory technology began to alleviate the speed and storage capacity issues with portable USB 2.0 flash drives. However, USB 2.0 technology is 10-years old. The technology initially promised up to 480Mbits and dubbed Hi-Speed USB. The 480Mbits of bandwidth translates into the equivalent of 60MB/s – performance figures unachievable at the time with the available storage hardware. Over the years, external storage technology began to speed up with faster hard disks and advances in flash memory technology. Flash memory controllers advanced to take advantage of multiple memory channels and eventually surpassed the limits of USB 2.0 technology. The latest storage devices can deliver consistent read and write speeds that max out the internal SATA interfaces found on desktops. This leads to increased demands from users that require their data with them at all times. External storage devices need to match the performance of internal devices to keep up with computer users. USB 2.0 technology is unable to deliver the performance and latches internal storage devices and after 10-years it's time for a new standard to emerge and make way for a new external expansion beyond USB 2.0.

SuperSpeed USB 3.0. SuperSpeed USB 3.0 upps the ante to the era of solid-state storage for lightning-fast devices that match internal storage devices. The Patriot Memory Supersonic USB 3.0 flash drive kicks USB 2.0 to the curb and takes advantage of USB 3.0 technology for performance that shatters expectations of external storage devices. For those that haven't adopted USB 3.0 technology yet, the Supersonic USB 3.0 is backwards compatible with USB 2.0 and USB 1.1 systems, but performance is severely limited by the aged bus. Those that are ready for USB 3.0 are rewarded with **read speeds up to 100MB/s** - that's fast enough to copy a 5GB file in a minute. No matter what your storage demands are, the Patriot Memory Supersonic USB 3.0 is sized to accommodate your needs -- **32GB and 64GB** capacities available – and enough performance to instantly transfer your largest files. It's **unparalleled performance** is from the Patriot Memory **Supersonic USB 3.0** flash drive kicks USB 2.0 to the curb and takes advantage of USB 3.0 technology for **lightning-fast** performance that **shatters expectations** of external storage devices. For those that haven't adopted USB 3.0 technology yet, the Supersonic USB 3.0 is backwards compatible with USB 2.0 and USB 1.1 systems, but performance is severely limited by the aged bus. Those that are ready for USB 3.0 are rewarded with **read speeds up to 100MB/s** - that's fast enough to copy a 5GB file in a minute. No matter what your storage demands are, the Patriot Memory Supersonic USB 3.0 is sized to accommodate your needs -- **32GB and 64GB** capacities available – and enough performance to instantly transfer your largest files. It's **unparalleled performance** is with the available storage hardware. Over the years, external storage speed up with faster hard disks and advances in flash memory controllers advanced to take advantage of multiple memory surpassed the limits of USB 2.0 technology. The latest storage t read and write speeds that max out the internal SATA interfaces

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HP, Lexmark Introduce Bold New MFP Features

SHINY, BLACK, AND stuffed with new features, the HP Photosmart eStation e-All-in-One and the Lexmark Genesis inkjet multifunction printers inject a rare dose of innovation into the staid printer market. Whether the "wow" factor justifies the $400 price of either machine, however, depends on how you feel about the extras involved.

The eStation e-All-in-One's Zeen, docked on the front of the MFP, is a removable, 7-inch color touchscreen control panel that looks a lot like a tablet and can handle Web browsing, e-reading (via BN.com), and tablet content printing. HP's ever-growing collection of Web-based printing apps is available, too. The Zeen currently runs on Android 2.1, but HP plans to upgrade the operating system to Android 2.2 sometime in early 2011, with an upgrade available to existing eStation users.

THE HP PHOTOSMART eStation e-All-in-One has a removable, tabletlike Zeen control panel.

The printer has a 125-sheet input tray, an integrated 20-sheet photo tray, and an automatic duplexer. In our tests, the unit delivered above-average performance, producing crisp text at a clip of 8.4 pages per minute and snapshot-size photos at 3.8 ppm; images looked somewhat grainy on plain paper but smooth on glossy paper. The ink costs are average.

★★★½☆ VERY GOOD

Photosmart eStation e-All-in-One | HP

Solid performer has a unique, detachable, tabletlike control panel.

Street: $400

find.pcworld.com/71047

Lexmark's New Ideas

The Lexmark Genesis's vertical, displaylike profile beckons you to ogle it. The front

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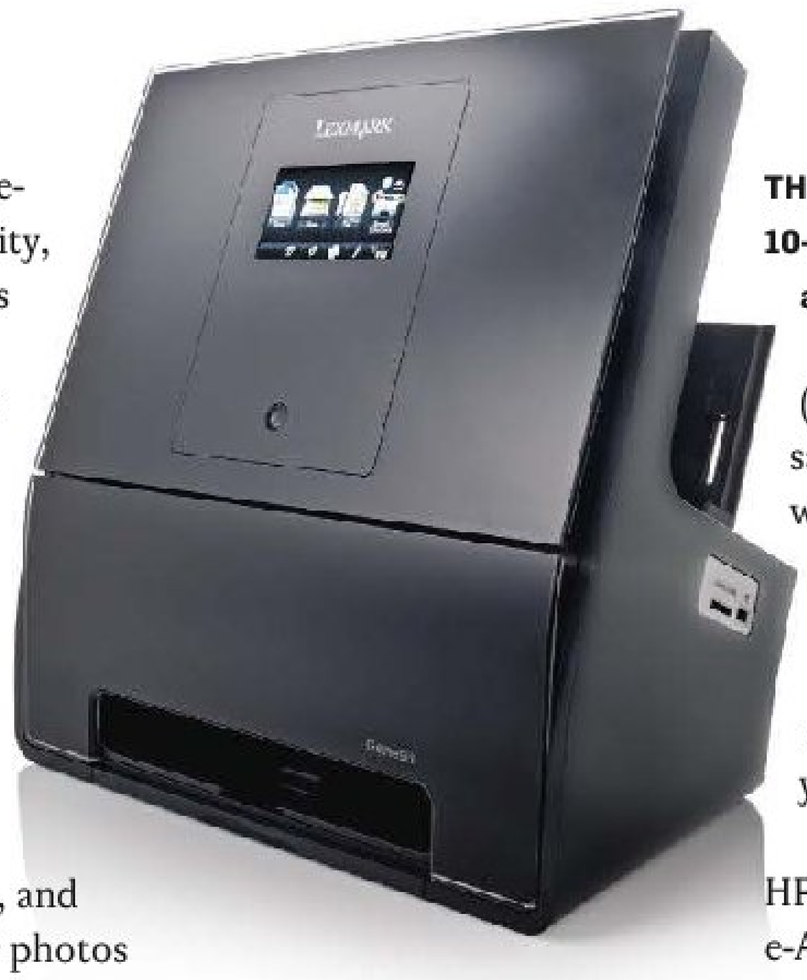
panel showcases a 4.3-inch, capacitive touchscreen LCD and context-sensitive touch controls. The display is especially fun to use with Lexmark's Smart Solutions, a growing collection of apps that you can program to automate local multifunction tasks or use to access Web-based services.

Behind the new look of the Genesis is a new kind of scanner: a 10-megapixel camera. In tests, it scanned any kind of image, regardless of complexity, in just a few seconds (as opposed to the dozens or hundreds of seconds that a conventional scanner requires). Images were comparable in quality to conventional scanner output, though copied text looked a little faded, and finer details in color photos and line art seemed slightly foggy or jagged. But the camera picked up more surface flaws on our samples than most scanners do.



THE LEXMARK GENESIS uses a 10-megapixel camera instead of a scanner for digital images.

The printer inside the Genesis is modestly configured, with a 100-sheet rear vertical input and a 25-sheet output tray. Print quality and speed were unremarkable: Pages of text seemed slightly feathery and emerged at a rate of 6.4 ppm, while snapshot-size photos looked washed-out on plain paper but better (though sometimes oversaturated) on glossy paper, with an output rate of 1.9 ppm. The MFP's inks are very expensive in standard returnable sizes, and still pricey in high-yield returnable versions.

Lexmark's Genesis and HP's Photosmart eStation e-All-in-One are equally interesting. But after you've shown your MFP off to the neighbors, you might want to print. And in this fundamental regard, the HP wins the prize for being faster and having lower ink costs.

—Melissa Riofrio

★★★☆☆ **GOOD**

Genesis | Lexmark

MFP's vertical profile and camera-based scanner offset pricey inks.

Street: $400

find.pcworld.com/71048

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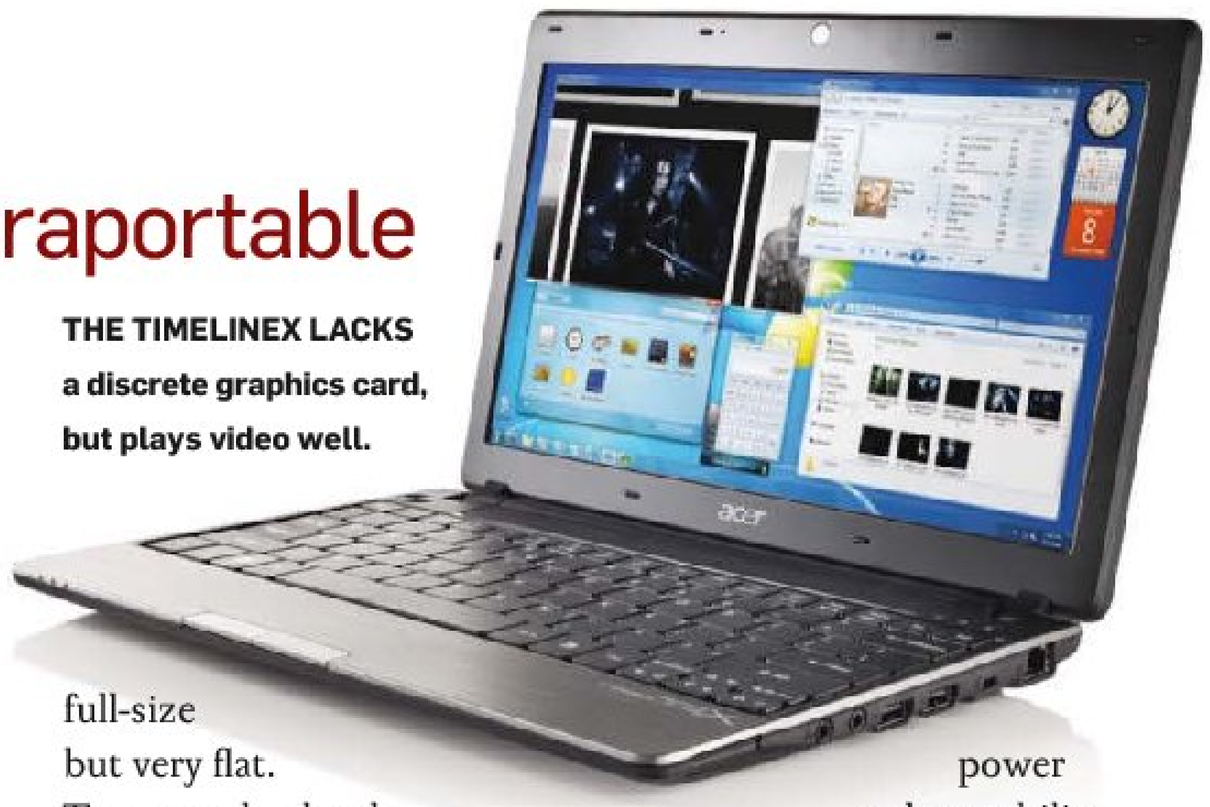

THE TIMELINEX LACKS a discrete graphics card, but plays video well.

THE ACER Aspire TimelineX 1830T-68U118 packs lots of power into a tiny package, and yet still manages to add a full-size keyboard.

Our $899 review model carried an ultra-low-voltage 1.47GHz Core i7 processor, 4GB of RAM, a 500GB hard drive, and 64-bit Windows 7 Home Premium. For connectivity you get an ethernet port, Wi-Fi, and Bluetooth, but no mobile broadband.

The sleek TimelineX is 11.2 inches wide, 8 inches long, and just over 1 inch thick; it weighs 3 pounds. The laptop's battery lasted for 6.5 hours on one charge.

In addition to three USB 2.0 ports, the unit has headphone and microphone jacks, a five-in-one card reader slot, HDMI-out and VGA-out, and a Kensington lock port.

The notebook's floating Chiclet-style keyboard is full-size but very flat. The smooth, closely spaced keys are flush with the palm rest, and they offer frustratingly weak feedback.

The glossy, 11.6-inch screen has a native resolution of 1366 by 768 pixels. The display quality is pretty good.

The Acer Aspire TimelineX 1830T-68U118 combines power and portability in an appealing package that costs $100 less than the new Macbook Air. The laptop's keyboard and touchpad are flawed—but for a machine with a Core i7 processor and an 11.6-inch screen, you do have to make some sacrifices.

—Sarah Jacobsson Purewal

★★★½☆ VERY GOOD

Aspire TimelineX 1830T-68U118

Acer

Poor keyboard and touchpad detract from this otherwise sleek laptop.

Street: $899

find.pcworld.com/71060

Top 5 Monochrome Laser Printers

Dell dominates the chart with three productive models for three types of workplace.

MODEL		Rating	Performance	Features and specifications
1	BEST BUY **Lexmark E460dn** **$599** find.pcworld.com/62482	★★★★☆ VERY GOOD	• Text quality: Superior • Graphics quality: Very Good • Tested speeds: 24.3 ppm text/4.8 ppm graphics	• USB, ethernet, parallel connectivity • 300 sheets input standard, 850 maximum • Automatic duplexing standard
	▸ The E460dn delivers great speed and print quality, but pricey toner and a skimpy standard paper capacity dim its luster.			
2	**Dell 5230dn Laser Printer** **$999 NEW** find.pcworld.com/70138	★★★★☆ VERY GOOD	• Text quality: Superior • Graphics quality: Fair • Tested speeds: 23.4 ppm text/4.9 ppm graphics	• USB, ethernet connectivity • 350 sheets input standard, 4000 maximum • Automatic duplexing standard
	▸ Fast, expandable, and blessed with inexpensive toner, this monochrome laser printer is well suited for a high-volume office.			
3	**Dell 3330dn Laser Printer** **$599** find.pcworld.com/64137	★★★½☆ VERY GOOD	• Text quality: Superior • Graphics quality: Good • Tested speeds: 23.8 ppm text/4.2 ppm graphics	• USB, ethernet, parallel connectivity • 300 sheets input standard, 850 maximum • Automatic duplexing standard
	▸ Speed, automatic duplexing, and modest but upgradable paper handling make this unit almost perfect for a busy workgroup.			
4	**Dell 2350dn Laser Printer** **$299 NEW** find.pcworld.com/71039	★★★½☆ VERY GOOD	• Text quality: Superior • Graphics quality: Very Good • Tested speeds: 22.8 ppm text/7.0 ppm graphics	• USB, ethernet, parallel connectivity • 300 sheets input standard, 850 maximum • Automatic duplexing standard
	▸ A multitalented workhorse, the 2350dn comes through with impressive speed and print quality, along with reasonable toner costs.			
5	**Xerox Phaser 4510/N** **$999** find.pcworld.com/62509	★★★½☆ VERY GOOD	• Text quality: Superior • Graphics quality: Fair • Tested speeds: 25.1 ppm text/4.2 ppm graphics	• USB, ethernet, parallel connectivity • 700 sheets input standard, 1800 maximum • Automatic duplexing optional
	▸ The Phaser 4510/N is fast and built to last, and we love its low-cost toner—but we wish that we could get decent graphic output from it.			

CHART NOTES: Rankings are as of 12/2/10. ppm = pages per minute.

MORE ONLINE Visit find.pcworld.com/71128 to see in-depth reviews, test results, and detailed specs for these monochrome laser printers.

PHOTOGRAPHS: ROBERT CARDIN

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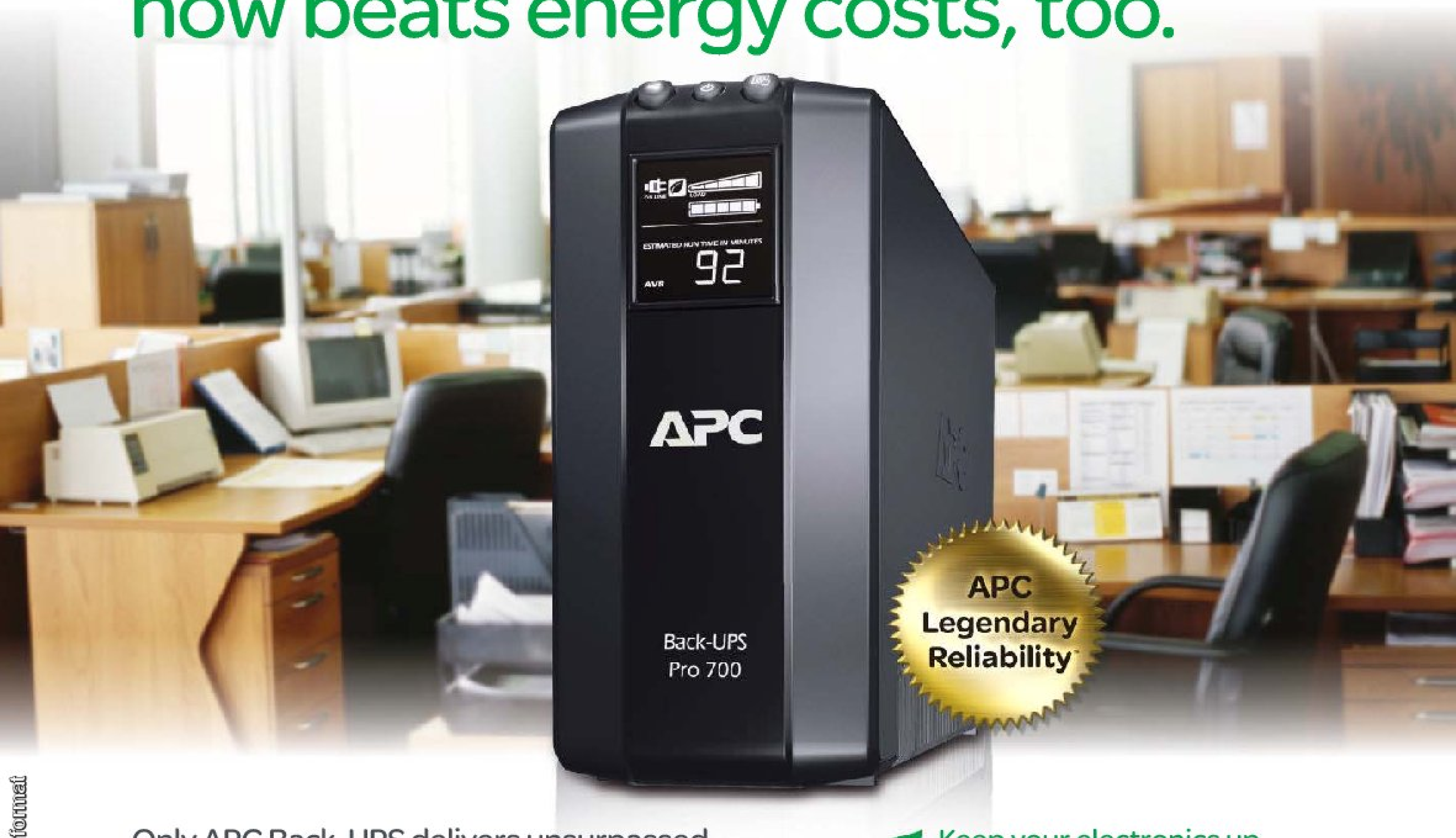

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High-performance Back-UPS Pro units deliver cost-cutting, energy-efficient features. Power-saving outlets automatically shut off power to unused devices when your computer and peripherals are turned off or on standby, eliminating costly electricity drains. *(BR700G shown above)*

The energy-efficient ES 750G

The ES 750G boasts innovative power-saving outlets, which automatically shut off power to controlled outlets when the computer plugged into the host outlet is deemed asleep, eliminating wasteful electricity drains.

- 10 Outlets • 450 Watts / 750 VA
- 70 Minutes Maximum Runtime
- Coax and Telephone/Network Protection

The best-value ES 550G

The ES 550G uses an ultra-efficient design that consumes less power during normal operation than any other battery backup in its class, saving you money on your electricity bill.

- 8 Outlets • 330 Watts / 550 VA
- 43 Minutes Maximum Runtime
- Telephone Protection

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HP's Multitouch Media-Savvy All-in-One PC

AN INTEGRATED Webcam/mic is embedded in the all-in-one's frame.

THE HP TOUCHSMART 310 ($1160) can do everything from streaming movies to slinging spreadsheets.

Loaded with a 2.5GHz Athlon X4 615e CPU, 6GB of DDR3 RAM, and ATI Radeon HD 4270 graphics, our review unit earned a WorldBench 6 score of 94.

The TouchSmart 310 handles television and movies with aplomb, but advanced games are out of its reach. Its streamlined 20-inch display responded quickly to touch input in our tests.

The PC is designed to work as a midlevel media center: Its recessed DVD burner complements a 1TB hard drive and an SD Card reader. Video playback looked great on the 20-inch touchscreen, though the maximum resolution of 1600 by 900 can't deliver true 1080p fidelity.

The HP TouchSmart 310 functions equally well as a workstation, family PC, or media center—all from within a compact and attractive case that looks at home on a desk or a kitchen counter.

—Alex Wawro

★★★★½ SUPERIOR

TouchSmart 310 | HP

PC combines polish, performance, and a simple touch interface.

Street: $1160

find.pcworld.com/71063

Top 5 Compact Desktops

Tons of storage space, a strong overall design, and a Blu-ray drive highlight our Best Buy.

MODEL	Rating	Performance	Features and specifications
1 **BEST BUY** Dell Inspiron Zino HD 410 **$825 NEW** find.pcworld.com/71066	★★★★½ SUPERIOR	• WorldBench 6 score: 78 • WorldBench 6 rating: Very Good • Overall design: Very Good	• 1.7GHz Phenom II X4 • 6GB RAM, 750GB storage • AMD Mobility Radeon HD 5450 • Blu-ray Disc
▸ Dell's compact Inspiron Zino HD 410 PC is speedy, connected, and ready for your next-generation movie discs.			
2 ViewSonic VOT530 PC Mini **$750 NEW** find.pcworld.com/71067	★★★ GOOD	• WorldBench 6 score: 90 • WorldBench 6 rating: Superior • Overall design: Fair	• 2.2GHz Core 2 Duo • 2GB RAM, 320GB storage • Intel integrated graphics • DVD±RW
▸ If your budget and your available space are sharply limited, you'll appreciate what ViewSonic's VOT530 has to offer.			
3 Acer Veriton N282G **$450 NEW** find.pcworld.com/71068	★★★ GOOD	• WorldBench 6 score: 42 • WorldBench 6 rating: Poor • Overall design: Good	• 1.8GHz Atom D525 • 2GB RAM, 320GB storage • Nvidia Ion 2 • No optical drive
▸ The Veriton N282G's six USB ports will tempt you, but don't expect this PC to do much more than basic spreadsheet work.			
4 Giada Slim-N20 **$450 NEW** find.pcworld.com/71069	★★½ FAIR	• WorldBench 6 score: 42 • WorldBench 6 rating: Poor • Overall design: Fair	• 1.66GHz Atom D510 • 2GB RAM, 320GB storage • Nvidia Ion 2 • No optical drive
▸ Like many other compact PCs, Giada's Slim-N20 sacrifices a great deal of performance at the altar of economy.			
5 eMachines ER1402-05 **$300 NEW** find.pcworld.com/71070	★★½ FAIR	• WorldBench 6 score: 62 • WorldBench 6 rating: Fair • Overall design: Fair	• 1.7GHz Athlon II K2 Neo K125 • 2GB RAM, 160GB storage • Nvidia GeForce 9200M GS • No optical drive
▸ This inexpensive compact PC from eMachines performs creditably, considering its extraordinarily low price.			

CHART NOTE: Ratings are as of 11/23/10.

MORE ONLINE Visit find.pcworld.com/71127 to see in-depth reviews, full test results, and detailed specs for these compact desktop PCs.

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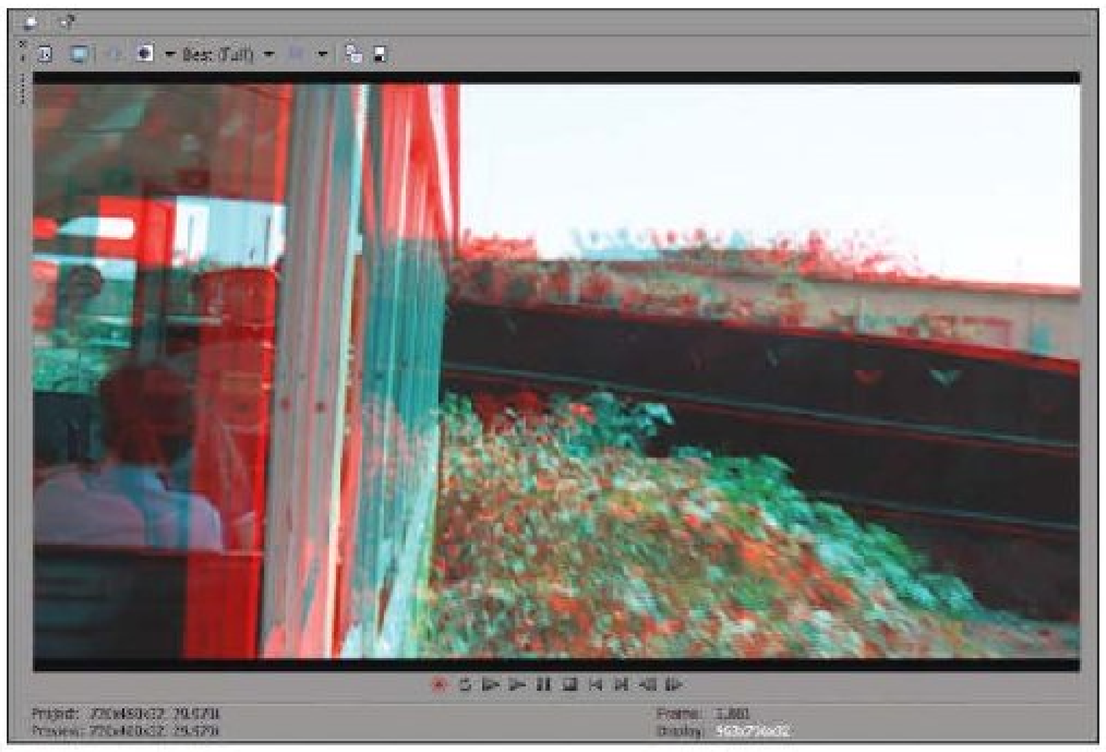
Sony Vegas Pro 10 Video Editor Adds 3D Functions

SONY'S VEGAS PRO video editing software has a less-flashy reputation than Apple Final Cut Pro 7 and Adobe Premiere Pro CS5 do, but it has its fans. Version 10 ($700; upgrade from previous versions, $250) gains some features that rivals already had, but it also gains several unique functions, including stereoscopic-3D editing.

You can use the software much like that of other editors in that it analyzes video and reduces movement by floating the image in the frame and cropping it. The stabilization worked well with my footage. You can set it to crop automatically, or you can adjust settings manually; I had luck even with the automatic setting.

Like Premiere Pro, Vegas Pro has multicam support, letting you play multiple video tracks and make quick cuts between them. Vegas Pro 10 goes one step further, adding live preview. I found it easy to use, and it created a snappy, upbeat movie.



IN VEGAS PRO 10, you can edit stereoscopic-3D video footage.

GPU Acceleration

Premiere Pro CS5 introduced GPU acceleration, which speeds up multiple functions and rendering using your computer's graphics card instead of its CPU. Now Vegas Pro 10 uses the GPU to accelerate output to Sony's .avc format.

However, at this point that's all it does—it accelerates just that one function, to a single output format. Furthermore, despite the fact that my PC has a supported graphics card, I saw no actual acceleration; the application relied on CPU power no matter what I did.

On the other hand, Vegas Pro 10 has extensive audio controls. It even supports 24-bit/192KHz audio, high-quality sound supported on Blu-ray Discs and the moribund DVD Audio format.

Most of the time, Vegas Pro 10 operates smoothly and quickly; the program feels perky and stable. That could be in part because it is a 64-bit app (which Vegas Pro has been since version 8), so it can take advantage of larger amounts of RAM. You can get it in a 32-bit version, though, that will run even on Windows XP.

A new plug-in architecture, Video FX, allows Vegas Pro to accept effects from third-party developers, and the app itself has many standard effects; Sony says Vegas Pro 10 comes with more than 300 video and audio effects.

If you're eager to create 3D videos, Vegas Pro 10 is your only option right now. Beyond that, it has many things going for it—but until Sony ramps up the GPU acceleration, Premiere Pro CS5 will continue to own the performance advantage.

—Alan Stafford

★★★½☆ **VERY GOOD**

Vegas Pro 10 | **Sony**

Editor has unique new features, but its GPU acceleration falls short.

List: $700 ($250 upgrade)

find.pcworld.com/71076

Archos 32: Good for Media

THE PALM-SIZE Archos 32 Internet Tablet ($150) is a high-quality music player with smooth video playback. But although it browses the Web and even runs Android apps, this minitablet (if it can be called that) misses the mark.

BASED ON ANDROID 2.2.1, the Archos 32 handles video and music well, but not text.

The 240-by-400-pixel display is passable for viewing photos and videos. But with text, the screen is harsh on the eyes, and text is blurry.

Audio playback was excellent in our tests. Video playback was smooth and jitter-free, though the images were not as crisp as we've seen elsewhere. The Archos 32's image viewer can handle JPEG, BMP, PNG, and GIF files, but they appeared less satisfactory than on higher-resolution devices.

—Robert S. Anthony

★★½☆☆ **FAIR**

Archos 32 Internet Tablet

Archos

This decent music and video device has a poor screen resolution.

List: $150

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Top 10 Desktop-Replacement Laptops

LAB TESTED

Dell's hefty Precision M6500 supports up to 32GB of RAM and provides a terrific display.

	MODEL	Rating	Performance	Features and specifications
1	Dell Precision M6500 **$4700 NEW** find.pcworld.com/71084	★★★★½ SUPERIOR	• WorldBench 6 score: 118 • WorldBench 6 rating: Superior • Overall design: Superior • Tested battery life: 2:04	• 2.0GHz Core i7-920XM • 17.1-inch widescreen • 9.0 pounds • 1000GB hard drive
	▸ The M6500 lives up to its reputation as one of the most powerful workstations on the market—and that's without counting upgrades.			
2	BEST BUY HP Envy 17 **$1825** find.pcworld.com/70865	★★★★½ SUPERIOR	• WorldBench 6 score: 108 • WorldBench 6 rating: Very Good • Overall design: Superior • Tested battery life: 2:19	• 1.73GHz Core i7-720QM • 17.3-inch widescreen • 7.9 pounds • 640GB hard drive
	▸ HP's Envy 17 is a robust, media-centric desktop replacement that's svelte enough to lug around if you need a large screen on the go.			
3	AVADirect Clevo X8100 Core i7 Gaming Notebook **$4100** find.pcworld.com/70509	★★★★½ SUPERIOR	• WorldBench 6 score: 120 • WorldBench 6 rating: Superior • Overall design: Very Good • Tested battery life: 1:26	• 1.73GHz Core i7-820QM • 18.4-inch widescreen • 12.4 pounds • 896GB hard drive
	▸ If you require an all-in-one gaming rig for a LAN party, the Clevo X1800 does the job, but a compact desktop may be cheaper.			
4	MSI GT660 **$1699** find.pcworld.com/70510	★★★★☆ VERY GOOD	• WorldBench 6 score: 108 • WorldBench 6 rating: Very Good • Overall design: Superior • Tested battery life: 2:33	• 1.73GHz Core i7-740QM • 16.0-inch touchscreen • 7.7 pounds • 1000GB hard drive
	▸ The stylish GT660, with a powerful GPU, is an all-around great gaming laptop as well as a capable desktop replacement.			
5	Alienware M17x **$3849** find.pcworld.com/70063	★★★★☆ VERY GOOD	• WorldBench 6 score: 100 • WorldBench 6 rating: Very Good • Overall design: Very Good • Tested battery life: 3:04	• 2.53GHz Core 2 Extreme QX9300 • 17.0-inch widescreen • 11.7 pounds • 320GB hard drive
	▸ A tricked-out gaming machine like the M17x will perform well—and cost you a lot of money. But few look as good.			
6	HP EliteBook 8740w **$3000 NEW** find.pcworld.com/71085	★★★★☆ VERY GOOD	• WorldBench 6 score: 99 • WorldBench 6 rating: Very Good • Overall design: Superior • Tested battery life: 1:45	• 2.4GHz Core i5-520M • 17.0-inch widescreen • 8.5 pounds • 320GB hard drive
	▸ If you're looking for a business-rugged laptop that has all the power of a desktop and all the sexiness of a Mac, this is the one for you.			
7	Asus G73Jw **$1745 NEW** find.pcworld.com/71087	★★★★☆ VERY GOOD	• WorldBench 6 score: 109 • WorldBench 6 rating: Very Good • Overall design: Very Good • Tested battery life: 1:48	• 1.73GHz Core i7-740QM • 17.3-inch widescreen • 8.8 pounds • 1000GB hard drive
	▸ The G73Jw is a great laptop for gamers who are willing to spend additional money on peripherals like an external keyboard.			
8	Dell Studio 17 (model 1747) **$1100** find.pcworld.com/70511	★★★½☆ VERY GOOD	• WorldBench 6 score: 103 • WorldBench 6 rating: Very Good • Overall design: Superior • Tested battery life: 3:23	• 1.6GHz Core i7-720QM • 17.1-inch widescreen • 8.7 pounds • 500GB hard drive
	▸ The affordable Dell Studio 17 offers a solid design, good battery life, and a wide variety of configurations.			
9	Samsung RF710-S02 **$1049 NEW** find.pcworld.com/71088	★★★☆☆ GOOD	• WorldBench 6 score: 103 • WorldBench 6 rating: Very Good • Overall design: Very Good • Tested battery life: 2:23	• 1.6GHz Core i7-720QM • 17.3-inch widescreen • 6.5 pounds • 640GB hard drive
	▸ Samsung's modern-looking desktop replacement has solid components, but the overall implementation is slightly underwhelming.			
10	Sony VAIO VPCF13AFX **$1375 NEW** find.pcworld.com/71089	★★★☆☆ GOOD	• WorldBench 6 score: 107 • WorldBench 6 rating: Very Good • Overall design: Very Good • Tested battery life: 2:24	• 1.73GHz Core i7-740QM • 16.4-inch widescreen • 6.6 pounds • 500GB hard drive
	▸ The VPCF13AFX is both a looker and a great performer, but it isn't the longest-lived desktop replacement you can find.			

CHART NOTES: Ratings are as of 12/6/10. Tested battery life figures are expressed in hours:minutes. Laptop weights do not include the power adapter.

MORE ONLINE Visit find.pcworld.com/70832 to see in-depth reviews, full test results, and detailed specs for all laptops on this chart.

PHOTOGRAPHS: ROBERT CARDIN

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THE GTX 580 surpassed both its predecessor and high-end AMD cards in tests.

Nvidia GTX 580: Fastest GPU Money Can Buy

AT $500, NVIDIA'S GeForce GTX 580 graphics card is aimed at enthusiasts who will accept nothing less than the best.

And they'll find speed in spades here: The GTX 580 is the fastest single-GPU card on the market, sailing right through our battery of tests. (For a breakdown of its innards compared with AMD's premier offerings, see find.pcworld.com/71053.)

Nvidia has retooled the graphics processing unit to mitigate some of the power and temperature issues that plagued its previous flagship board, the GTX 480. The GTX 580 is quieter, cooler, and more efficient; for example, it shaves 20 watts off of its predecessor's idle and full-load power ratings.

We pitted the GTX 580 against the GTX 480, plus AMD's Radeon HD 5870 and HD 5970 (a dual-GPU board). In the Unigine Heaven benchmark (a strenuous DirectX 11 test with tessellation and geometry-heavy scenes), the GTX 580 took a decisive lead, outdoing even the HD 5970's ample muscle. The HD 5970 retook the lead in the 3DMark Vantage benchmark, but not by much.

Our real-world gaming tests saw more of the same, with the HD 5970 holding a near-constant lead and the GTX 580 nipping at its heels. Results in a demo of Dirt 2 were another story: The GTX 580 pulled ahead by as much as 80 percent over the HD 5870. It kept a steady lead over the HD 5970, by up to 40 percent.

The GTX 580 still has a few of the GTX 480's problems. If you want to run three (or more) monitors, for instance, you need to buy a second GTX 580. It also lacks a DisplayPort connector.

Those issues aside, Nvidia has reforged an unwieldy titan into a graphics board that outpaces competitors.

—Nate Ralph

★★★★☆ **VERY GOOD**

GeForce GTX 580 | **Nvidia**

This superfast high-end graphics board outdoes the competition.

List: $500

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Vizio VMB070: Unsuitable for Outdoor Viewing

THE VMB070'S GLOSSY screen produces glare outdoors.

WHETHER YOU GO tailgating or you live in a *really* tiny apartment, you might have reasons to want a 7-inch TV. Vizio's strengths as a maker of TV sets shine through in its 7-inch LED LCD TV, the $150 VMB070. But making a TV for a living-room setting is not the same as making a portable TV for use both indoors and outdoors.

The set has just one composite input, one RF input, and an antenna. However, as the antenna can't hold a signal while you're moving, you can't watch over-the-air broadcasts in a car.

A USB port lets the set act as a photo frame, but it supports only JPEG files—no audio or video. Some of my JPEGs didn't work; the photos from my camera were too high a resolution for the TV to scale down and display.

Although you probably won't sit far enough away to need the remote, it's easier to use than the TV's touch-sensitive buttons, which sometimes respond poorly.

Indoors, the VMB070's LED lighting keeps the image bright, its 800-by-480-pixel resolution handles over-the-air broadcasts well, and viewing angles are impressive. But once you take it outside, the glossy coating reflects too much light and makes seeing anything other than your reflection fairly hard.

The battery lasted for 3 hours, 20 minutes—better than comparable 7-inch TVs, which typically promise a 2.5-hour battery life.

The speakers aren't especially loud, and the sound is tinny. Fortunately, the TV set has a headphone jack.

—Patrick Miller

★★★☆☆ GOOD

VMB070 | Vizio

Despite good indoor image quality, shortcomings hold this tiny TV back.

List: $150

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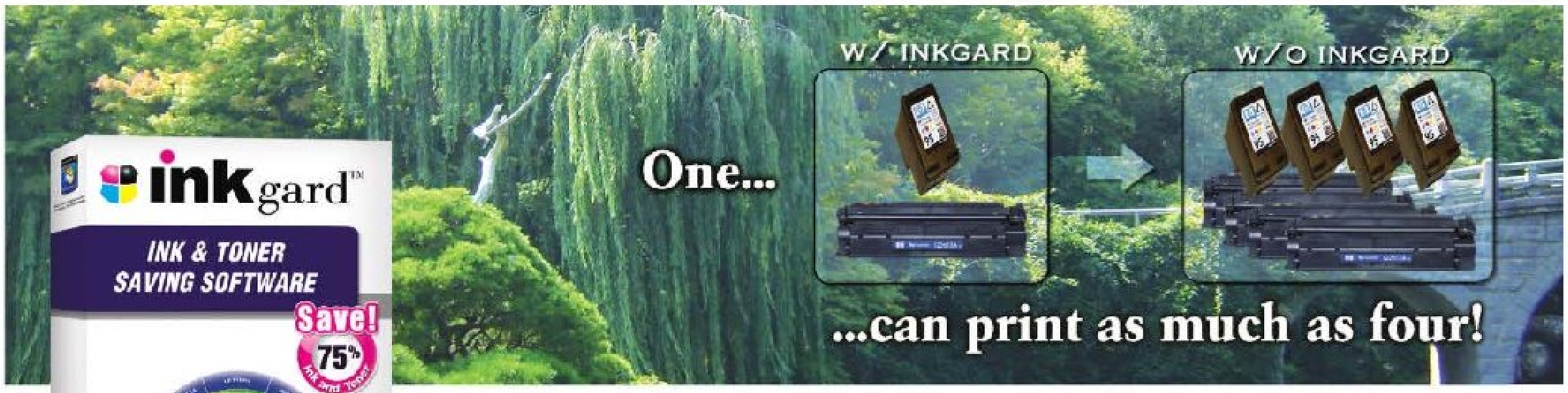

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HTC HD7: Excellent Phone Gets No 4G Love

THE HTC HD7 ($200 with a two-year T-Mobile contract) has a 4.3-inch display, a 1GHz Snapdragon processor, and a 5-megapixel camera. It also runs Windows Phone 7.

Unfortunately, the HD7 supports only HSPA, which has a 7.2-mbps download speed. Although T-Mobile's HSPA+ (which offers speeds on a par with those of 4G networks) is still in the early stages of expansion, it's disappointing (and odd) that the HD7 missed out.

Measuring 4.8 by 2.7 by 0.4 inches and weighing 5.7 ounces, the HD2 is a beast. The phone is attractive, however, and sure to turn heads.

The camera has a dual-LED flash. Photos taken outside on a sunny day had bright colors and sharp details. But when I zoomed in on a distant building, my photo came out blurry. Indoor shots seemed overexposed, even with the flash off.

THE WINDOWS PHONE 7–based HD7 is a good entertainment phone.

In casual speed tests over Wi-Fi, the browser was pretty fast. PCWorld.com loaded fully in 22 seconds.

Syncing my Facebook profile to the HD7 took about four tries; I'm not sure if this was a network issue or a problem with the OS. The HD7 also switched between EDGE and 3G fairly often around San Francisco.

Call quality was hit-or-miss over T-Mobile's 3G network. Callers sounded good, but slightly distant and tinny. When I was on a busy street, the other party had difficulty hearing me.

If you're longing for Windows Phone 7, the HTC HD7 is a nice choice and a great entertainment phone.

—Ginny Mies

★★★★☆ **VERY GOOD**

HD7 | HTC

Phone has great specs but doesn't use T-Mobile's HSPA+ network.

List: $200 (with two-year contract)

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DESPITE A FEW quirks, Carbonite is simple to use overall.

Carbonite: Easy and Inexpensive

CARBONITE IS A great online backup program and service, once configured.

Version 4.0 warns you on the first page that it doesn't automatically select .exe, video, and files over 4GB for backup. But I wish Carbonite had added an option to include those types of files. Even when you explicitly add a folder holding them, it skips such files; you must go into the folder and add them.

Elements of the interface are brilliant, such as the colored dots on the Windows Explorer file icons that tell each file's backup status.

Once you've configured Carbonite, it works great. It offers Web access so you can download a file from virtually anywhere. The service is priced competitively, too: $55 per year, per computer for unlimited backup.

—Jon L. Jacobi

★★★½☆ **VERY GOOD**

Carbonite 4.0 | Carbonite

Fast, reliable online backup service has a few file-selection pitfalls.

List: $55 per year, per PC

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DOWNLOAD THIS

Curb Grabby Processes, Print and Blog Better

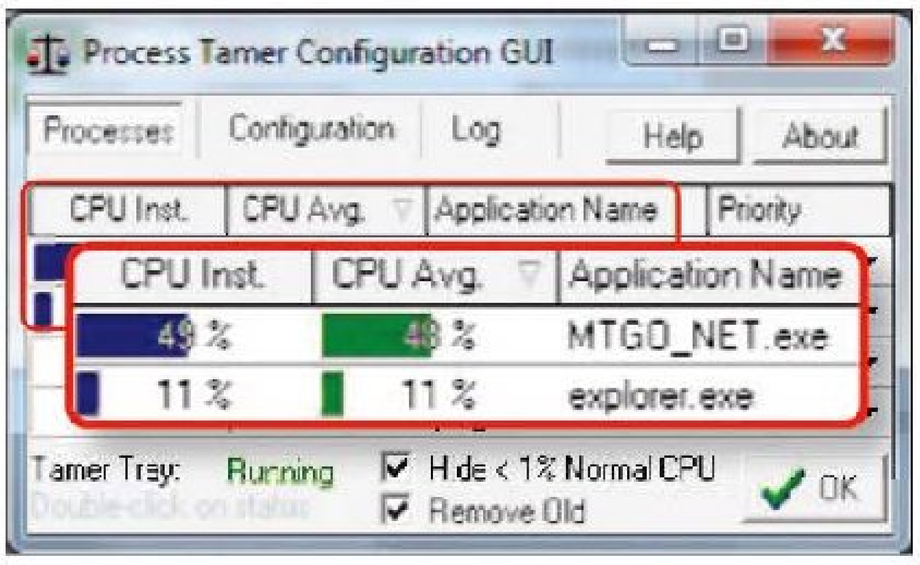
SOFTWARE AND WEBSITES can demand too much of your PC, your paper, and you. We found a utility that keeps bossy processes from hogging system resources. If you'd like to print only part of a Web page—excluding all the ads—we have just the Internet Explorer plug-in to help. And an offline blogging tool lets you lay out a beautiful-looking entry before logging in. Each program is free or donationware.

YOU CAN SELECT Web page elements to print—skipping the items you don't want, such as the ads—with the HP Smart Web Printing utility.

Process Tamer

If you've ever looked at Windows Task Manager and noticed an application hogging 70 percent or more of the CPU resources, normally you haven't been able to do much in response except close the application or kill its processes. Process Tamer offers an alternative. This tiny utility stays in the background and keeps a watchful eye for programs that attempt to hog your system. It then automatically lowers the priority on the offending applications, freeing up all-important resources for whatever else your computer is running at the time.

find.pcworld.com/71100 *—Steve Horton*



ARE ONE OR more programs taking most of your CPU power? Keep resource gluttons in check with Process Tamer.

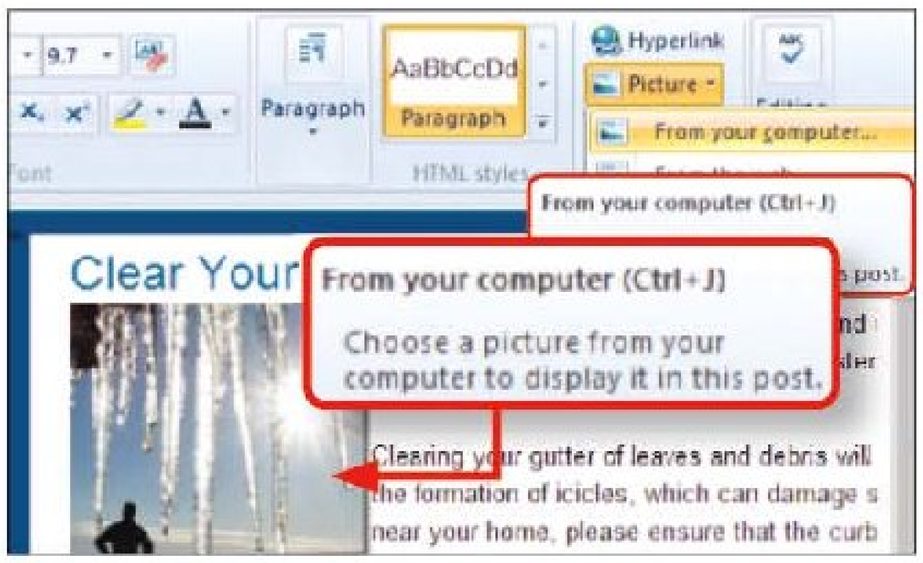
HP Smart Web Printing

You don't often get a giveaway as handy as HP's Smart Web Printing—a browser plug-in that helps you cut down on paper waste by allowing you to grab only the portions of Web pages you want and consolidate them into a single printed document. And despite what the name might make you think, this utility works with any printer, not just HP's own models. A menu permits you to either print your selection immediately or add it to the program's clipboard for editing, saving as a PDF file, or printing later. find.pcworld.com/71099 *—Jon L. Jacobi*

Windows Live Writer

Windows Live Writer 11 fills a niche I didn't know existed: offline blog-post production tool. This light word processor and design app helps you write posts and make them pretty. It comes in the free Windows Live Essentials suite, but you can install it by itself. Great for quick graphic design, good for offline writing, and possibly unnecessary for a word-heavy blogger, it gets the job done, as long as you install the requisite patches and updates.

find.pcworld.com/71098 *—Andrew Brandt*



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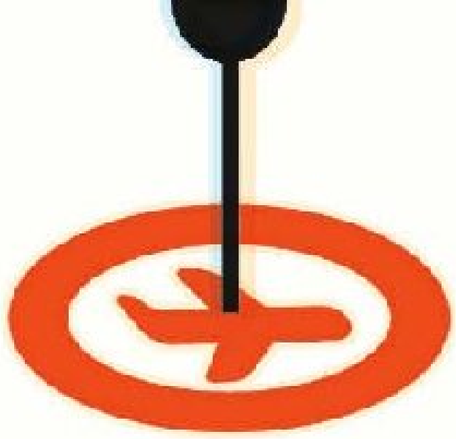
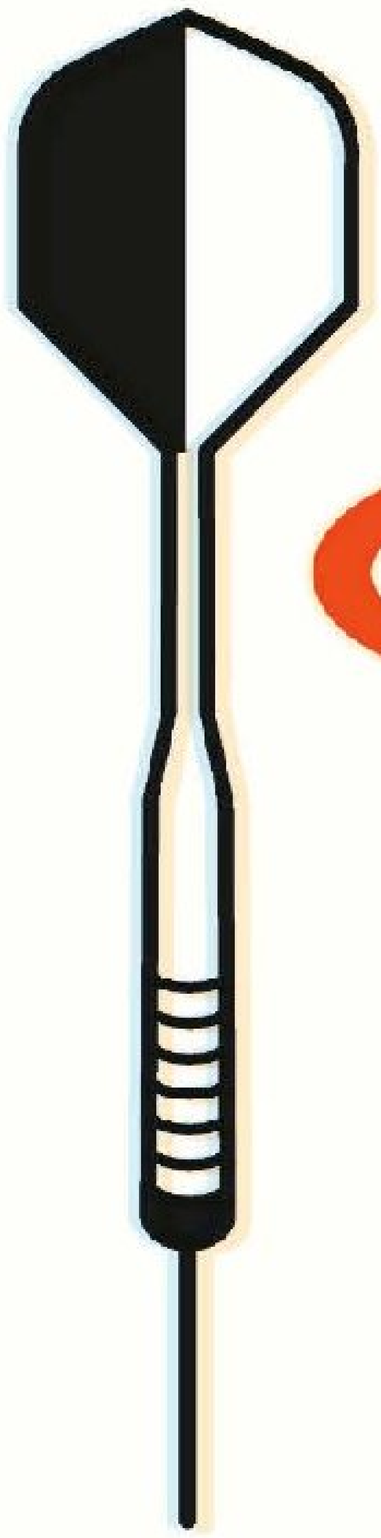
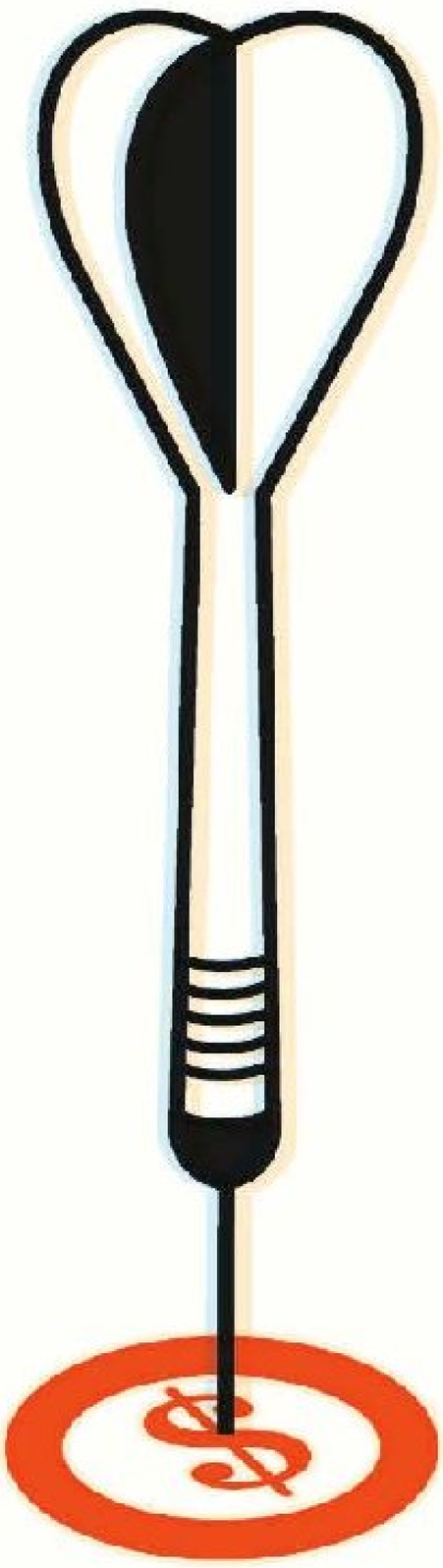


Best Sites

Rock-bottom **travel** fares, free **office** suites, dependable system **tools**, and more. These 46 **amazing sites** save you **time**, protect your **budget**, and **improve** your productivity.





THE WEB IS A BIG PLACE. *Really* big—around 300 million sites and counting. So no one could blame you if you don't have time to browse through all that stuff, try all the latest and greatest online services, and find the very best. Good news: We've done it for you.

PCWorld's editors have roamed all over the Net searching out the finest sites for travel, search, dining, news, shopping, finance, and more. Presented here are 46 amazing sites—the best on the Web. These phenomenal Websites should be your go-to resources for everything you need to do online.

But we didn't stop there. Because every user is unique, we've also collected great alternatives that do things the top sites can't. From quirky-but-cool photo tools to off-the-beaten-path vacation rentals, this roundup is brimming with sites you'll love. »

BY ROBERT STROHMEYER

ILLUSTRATIONS BY HARRY CAMPBELL

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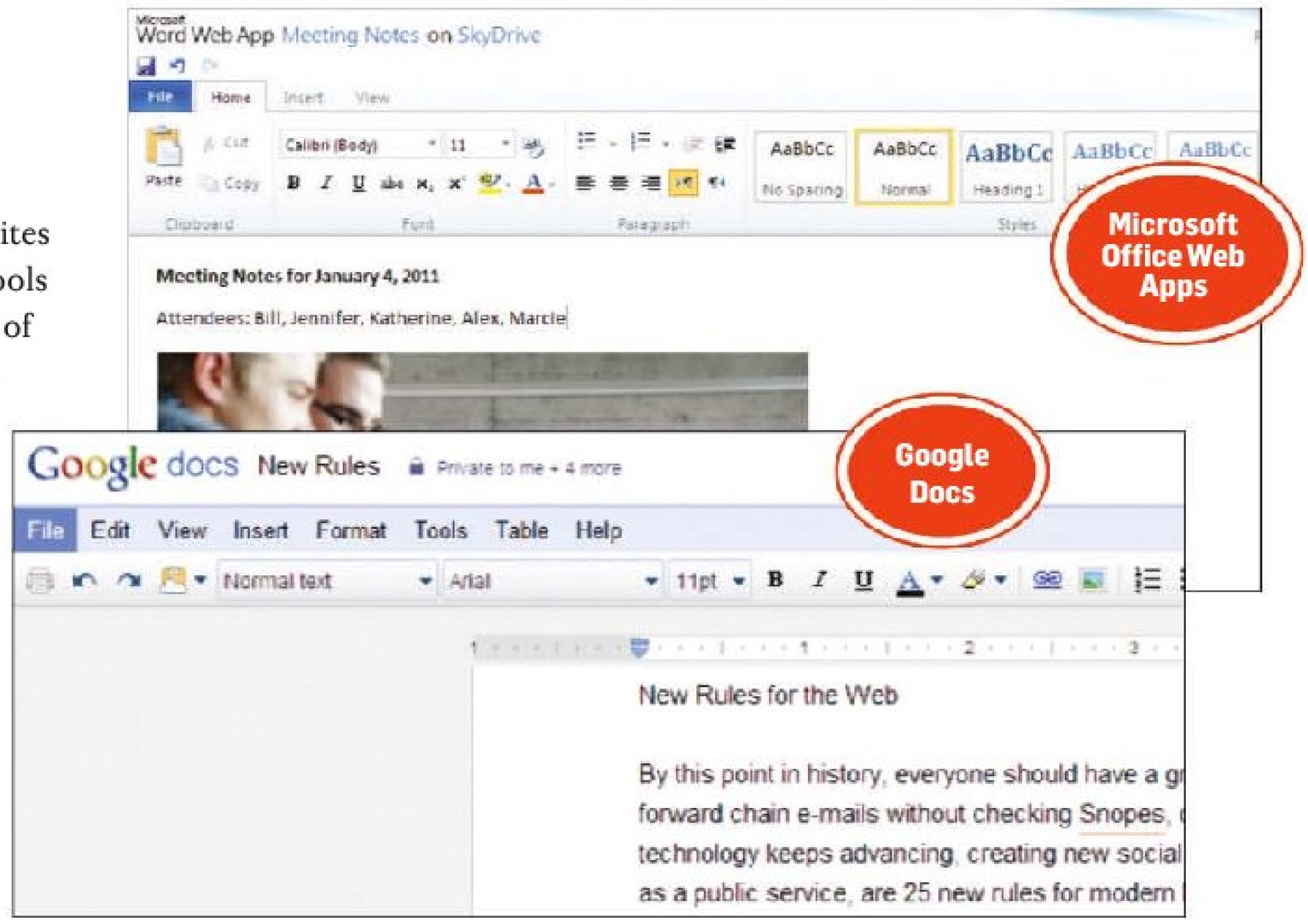
Office Apps

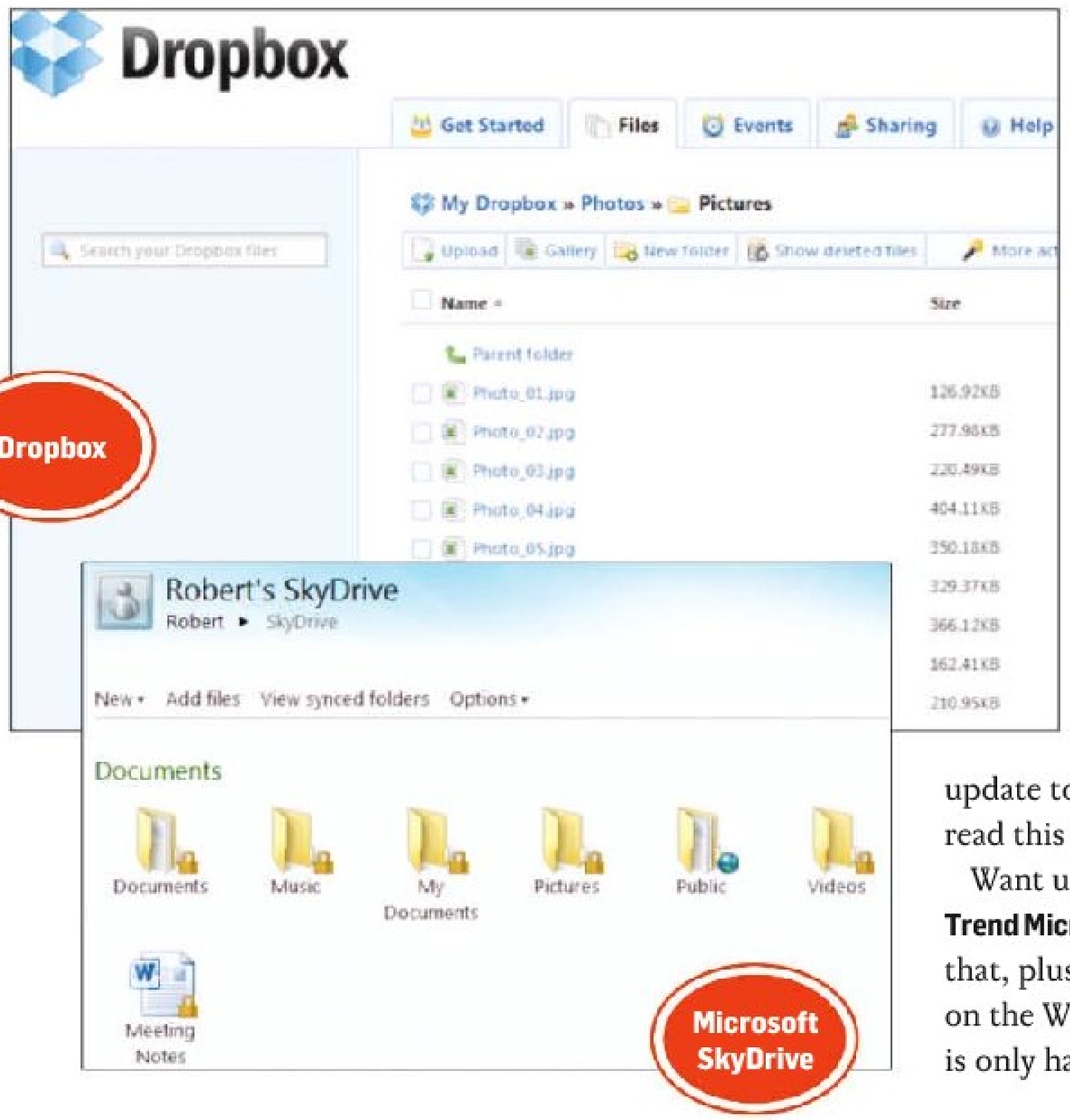


Over the past few years, Web-based office suites have grown from humble roots to become tools that nearly match the flexibility and features of full-blown desktop apps. Google has led the way in this burgeoning category with its popular Docs family of programs, though rival Zoho offers a broader, easier-to-use, and more sophisticated suite. But while most online suites have slightly kludgy interfaces that come with their share of quirks, Microsoft's introduction of Web Apps with Office 2010 offers the familiar, refined interface you already know, directly integrating a desktop suite that outstrips all online competitors.

Most people rely so heavily on their word processors and spreadsheets that it's difficult to depend on a solely cloud-based system. Microsoft's version of a cloud offering—**Office Web Apps** (free, find.pcworld.com/71083)—provides the best of both worlds. Combined with Office, the apps allow you to work in a robust desktop suite as well as to store, access, and edit your documents online.

If you're a Gmail user and your needs are modest, **Google Docs** (free, docs.google.com) is a highly serviceable secondary choice. It suffers from quirky formatting and compatibility issues with Microsoft Office files, but its integration with Gmail makes it worth a try.

For a full-service cloud-based suite that gives you options for everything from accounting to human-resources management, be sure to check out the massive array of services from **Zoho** (free for personal use, zoho.com).



Storage

One of the greatest challenges of the mobile age is keeping your essential files online, accessible, and in sync from all your devices. **Dropbox** (free, dropbox.com) rises to that challenge with 2GB of online storage that syncs to apps on Windows, Mac, Linux, Android, and iOS.

If you need 25GB of online storage, **Microsoft SkyDrive** delivers (free, skydrive.live.com). The service lacks good mobile integration overall, but it works great on Windows and gives you a clean Web interface for Mac computers and Linux systems. As of this writing, SkyDrive also permits you to share pictures by way of Windows Phone 7 handsets, and a possible update to Microsoft's mobile OS due out by the time you read this could add access to other files as well.

Want unlimited storage to back up your entire hard drive? **Trend Micro SafeSync** (trendmicro.com/safesync) gives you just that, plus the ability to share files and folders with anyone on the Web. At $60 per year, SafeSync's unlimited capacity is only half the price of Dropbox's 50GB paid service.

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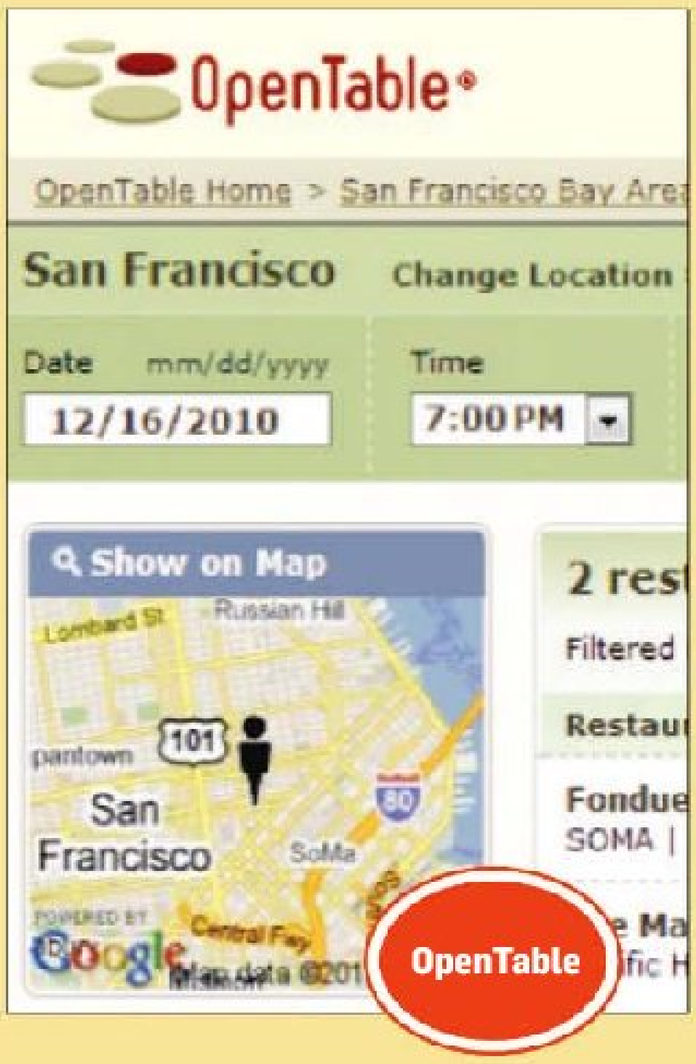
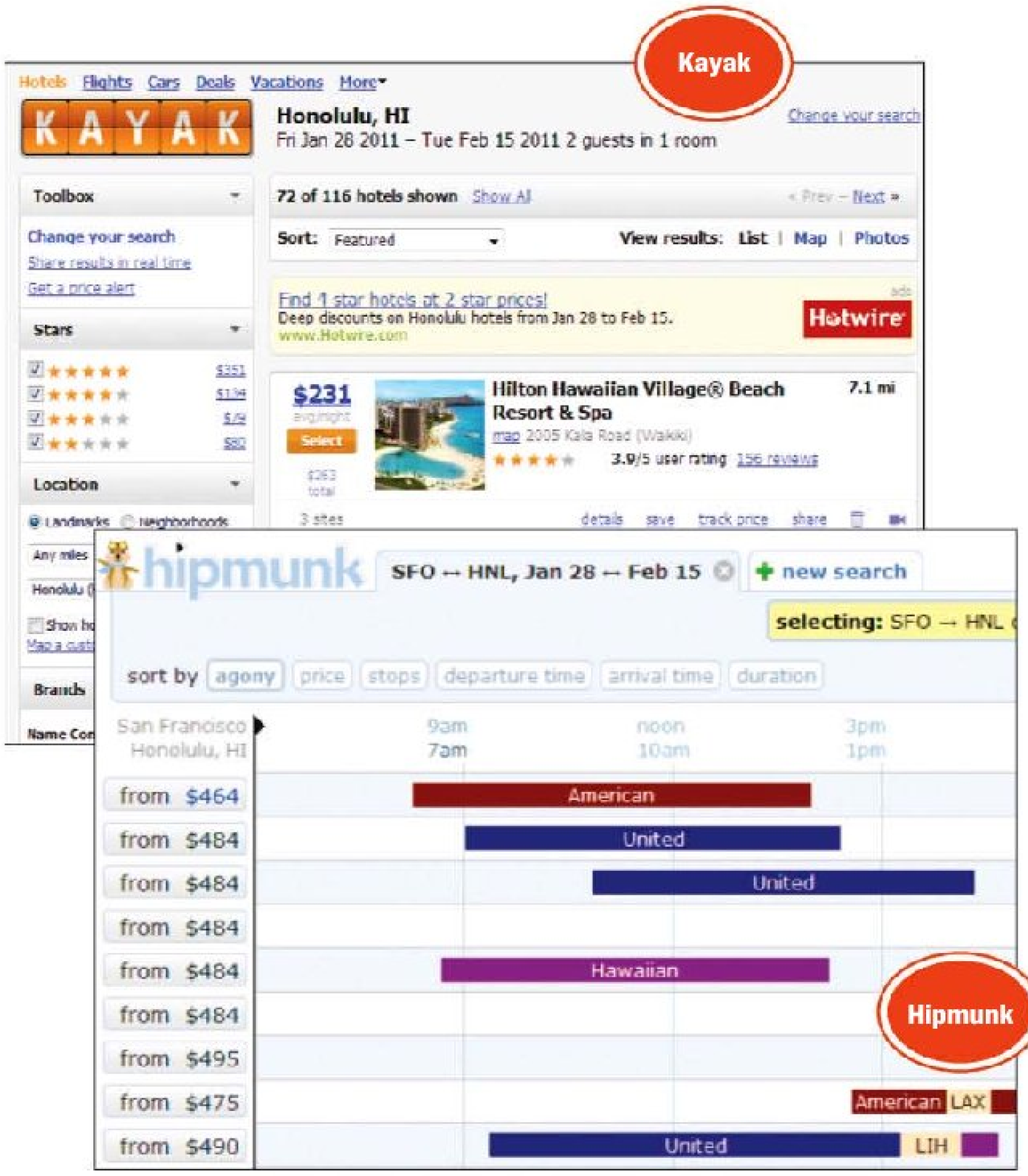
Dining

Eating out gets expensive, so you don't want to take chances on mediocre restaurants. **Yelp** (free, yelp.com) remains the number one site for finding good dining just about anywhere on earth. The site's iPhone and Android apps make it easy to locate highly rated spots in your vicinity right away, and they let you quickly gather tips on what to order when you arrive.

Don't waste time calling every restaurant in town to secure a reservation for your next date night or business lunch. **OpenTable** (opentable.com) can save you a spot at 15,000 restaurants around the world, for free. When you're traveling, use OpenTable's free iPhone or Android app to book a confirmed reservation instantly and effortlessly, even from a taxi.





Travel

Great travel sites are a lot like great travel destinations: There's an ideal place for everyone. Our all-around favorite travel assistant, **Kayak** (free, kayak.com), lets you punch in any destination, then it launches multiple searches on all of the major travel sites at once so that you can compare fares quickly. The only drawback is that it clutters up your PC's desktop with little windows for all the search results.

If you want to retrieve just the best airfare for your upcoming excursion, **Hipmunk** (free, hipmunk.com) searches all the major airlines simultaneously and presents the results in an intuitive timeline format that shows you fares, layovers, connections, and airlines at a glance.

For excellent customer service on flights, hotels, and travel packages, **Hotels.com** (free) can't be beat. The site has won our trust with dependable, friendly 24-hour phone assistance.

Of course, not everyone wants to stay in a hotel when they travel. If you're looking to rent a ski cabin this winter or you want to check out beach houses for a summer getaway, turn to Vacation Rentals By Owner, aka **VRBO** (free, vrbo.com). With VRBO, you deal directly with the property owners—but the site takes most of the guesswork out of renting a house for your holiday by offering user reviews from people who actually stayed in the rentals, and providing in-depth reviews when one of the site's employees has stayed there. Best of all, the site backs you up with $10,000 in rental protection in the event that the property owner rips you off. »

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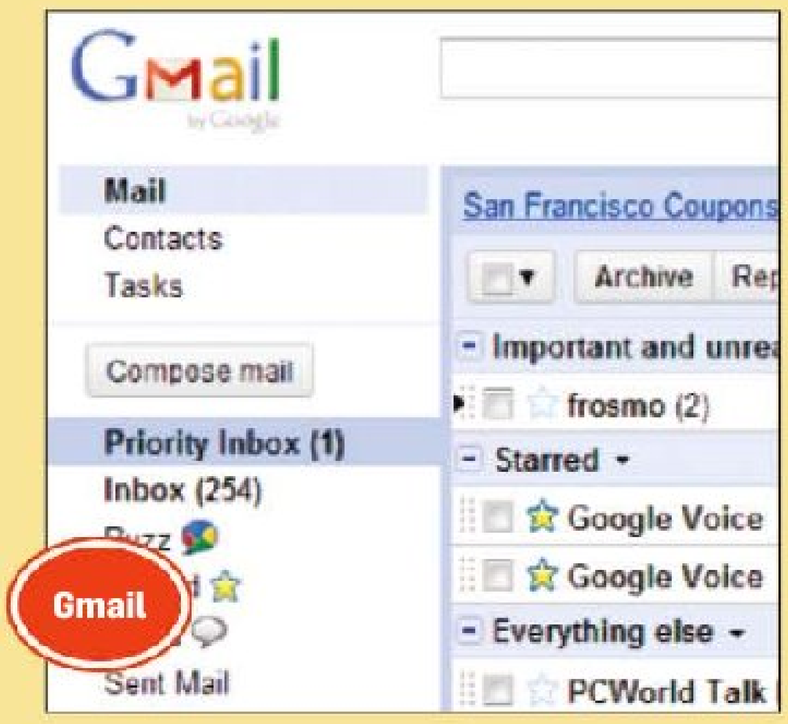
E-Mail

Conventional wisdom states that Google's **Gmail** (free, mail.google.com) won the battle for e-mail dominance long ago. After all, the service's 7.5GB of storage and relatively large 20MB attachment-size limit makes it hard to beat. On top of that, Gmail integrates nicely with Google Calendar, Docs, and the rest of Google's online apps.

But if you think it's time to close the book on the e-mail wars, think again. For its innovative search features, Gmail still gets top honors. If you want a solid alternative, however, Yahoo Mail has come back from the brink of irrelevance. **Yahoo Mail** (free, yahoo.com/mail) now offers an unlimited—that's right, unlimited—amount of storage, which makes any allocation of drive space measured in gigabytes seem paltry. Also, Yahoo Mail now includes apps for popular Web services, so you can easily connect your mail account to Evite, Flickr, PayPal, Photobucket, and more.



TV and Movies

The Web has come a long way since YouTube turned watching video online into an international obsession. Today you can not only fritter away your afternoon watching people make fools of themselves on your PC, but you can also stream full-length feature films and this week's hottest TV shows to just about any screen in your home.

Leading the way in online video is **Netflix** (from $8 monthly, netflix.com), which streams TV shows and movies to your computer and a host of other devices, including the Roku streamers, Apple TV, Microsoft Xbox 360, Sony PlayStation 3, Nintendo Wii, and a rapidly expanding list of HDTVs and Blu-ray players. Netflix's streaming-movie selection is still underwhelming at the moment, but it has tons of great television material, and the catalog is constantly growing.

Quickly gaining ground, with a fresh list of television programs and movies that serves as a worthy complement to Netflix's selection, is Hulu's **Hulu Plus** ($8 monthly, hulu.com/plus). The service is now available on Roku streaming boxes, as well as iOS-based phones and tablets, and of course Windows, Mac, and Linux computers.

For the latest movies that you can't yet get on the streaming services, be sure to check out **Amazon Video On Demand** (prices vary, amazon.com/videoondemand), which has a complete selection of new releases. You can watch videos online with your PC or Mac, or on your TV with a Roku XD or a number of other set-top boxes.

Just want to entertain your little ones with some child-safe video? Try **Kideos.com**. This free site filters out the junk from YouTube to offer a broad selection of age-appropriate videos for kids from infant (if it's even appropriate for babies to watch YouTube at all) to age 10.

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Cooking

With all the great food sites popping up on the Web, it's a wonder that anyone sells paper cookbooks anymore. The tastiest site we know of is **Allrecipes.com**, a community-driven site that gathers recipes from home chefs around the world into one massive catalog of cookery. Vegan? No problem. Wondering what to do with a pound of octopus? You have plenty of options. Other home cooks on the site rate and review the recipes, so you can see what everyone thought before you turn on the burner. And you can print out the instructions to fit in just about any recipe-card box.

Serious and aspiring gourmands would be remiss in passing up **Epicurious** (free, epicurious.com). A site curated by the editors of *Bon Appetit* and *Gourmet* magazines, Epicurious sizzles with comprehensive cooking guides, a wide assortment of recipes from top chefs, and step-by-step videos that skillfully show you how to cook just as the kitchen professionals do.

Need to make dinner fast without running out to the store? **FoodPair** (free, foodpair.com) gives you tons of recipe options based on the ingredients that you happen to have on hand. Terrific meal ideas are just a quick search away.

Personal Finance

Since the dawn of the PC, personal finance software has been a staple of home computing. Just as Intuit's Quicken package has dominated the home finance software market for years, the company now handily dominates the online finance arena as well with **Mint.com**. Mint is free, and it can track all of your bank accounts and investments. In addition, it monitors your budget and helps you meet your savings goals.

When you want to make sense of your financial options, you need access to a good assortment of financial calculators. **CalcMoolator** (calcmoolator.com) provides free calculators to help you compare mortgage options and auto loans, determine how much you could benefit from paying down your credit card debt more aggressively, and more.

Search

For most of the past decade, picking a search site was a no-brainer: Just use Google. (It was good enough for Yahoo.) Now Microsoft has made that choice a little more complicated, giving Google a serious run for its money with the introduction of Bing.

The two search giants have different strengths. For basic Web searches with instant results, **Google** (free, google.com) is still our top pick. And although our staff is divided on the question of image search, we still narrowly favor Google for pictures, too.

When you're searching for videos, though, it's hard to beat **Bing** (free, bing.com). The search engine lays out results in an intuitive grid, and even plays instant clips as you hover over them with your mouse, so you know what you'll see before you click. »

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Music

There's no shortage of great music on the Web, and there are thousands of great sites for finding it. Our favorite music site, **Grooveshark** (grooveshark.com), allows you to search for and play any song you like. It's free for browser-based listening, if you don't mind a few unobtrusive ads. Mobile access will set you back $3 a month.

Our second-favorite music site, **Pandora** (free, pandora.com), builds playlists around songs and artists you search for. It's a great way to discover music you might not have run across before, and the mobile app is free.

For unearthing music that you're sure to love, **Last.fm** (free) is invaluable. Employing a technique that the site's developers call "scrobbling," Last.fm's downloadable app tracks your music preferences on your PC, Mac, iPhone, or Android phone, and makes eerily smart recommendations.

When you just want to find one particular song quickly, try Google. It's hit-and-miss, but the site often turns up a full-length track that you can listen to right in your browser.

Reference Sites

Beyond all the cute cat pictures and embarrassing celebrity videos, the great promise of the Internet has always been education. If you can pry your eyes away from the latest goofy diversion on YouTube, you'll find an unfathomable store of knowledge out there just waiting for you.

You probably already realize that **Wikipedia** (free, wikipedia.org) is the largest single repository of collected human knowledge. Although this publicly edited encyclopedia has garnered widespread criticism concerning a few high-profile acts of page vandalism, the site's content has generally come out on top when subjected to serious academic review.

When you're looking for fast facts on just about anything, bypass Google and Wikipedia and head straight for **Wolfram Alpha** (free, wolframalpha.com). This reference site's unique algorithm constructs a quick information page on any subject that you search for. Type in "Montana," for example, and the site will bring up a simple-to-read list of essential facts about the state's population and economy, complete with links to primary sources.

The next time someone forwards you another obnoxious chain e-mail, browse to **Snopes.com** and search for the message's subject line. The free Snopes.com is the essential source for digging up the truth behind the Internet's most prevalent hoaxes, scams, urban legends, and myths. If more people we knew went there, we'd spend a lot less time rolling our eyes.

What Wikipedia is to general knowledge, **iFixit** (ifixit.com) is to technology. The site bills itself as "the free repair manual that you can edit," but it's much better than that. iFixit is loaded with user-created how-to instructions for upgrades and repairs, and the site includes links to official user manuals for most tech products. If you're really stumped about how to accomplish something, just ask your question, and the site's active community of tech experts will chime in to help you out. »

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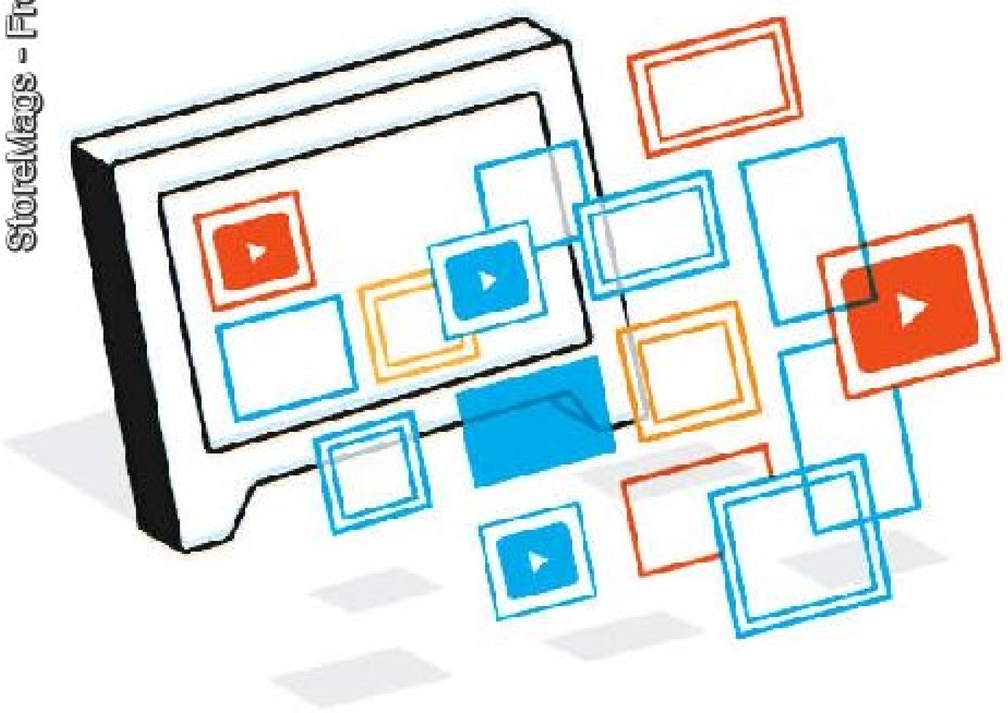
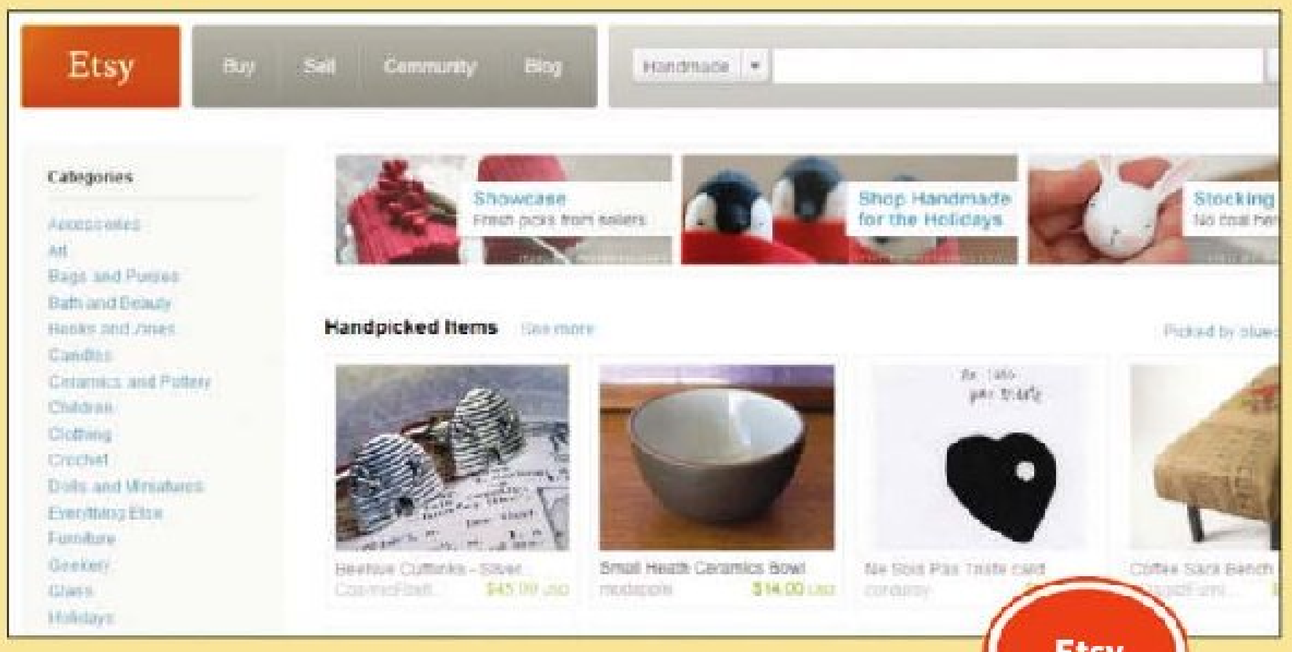
Photo and Video Sharing

Sharing pictures and home movies with relatives and buddies is easy: Simply upload photos or videos to **Facebook** (free, facebook.com), and they will be available to everyone on your friends list. Facebook offers high-resolution downloads, imposes no storage restrictions, and is arguably the most widespread mobile app for smartphones, so it's the most sensible place to upload all your pictures and videos.

If you want to edit your photos online, just go to **Picnik** (picnik.com). This free site provides you with incredibly simple tools for fixing your pictures, without forcing you to pass through a registration form first. Its tools even remove red-eye on dogs.





Shopping

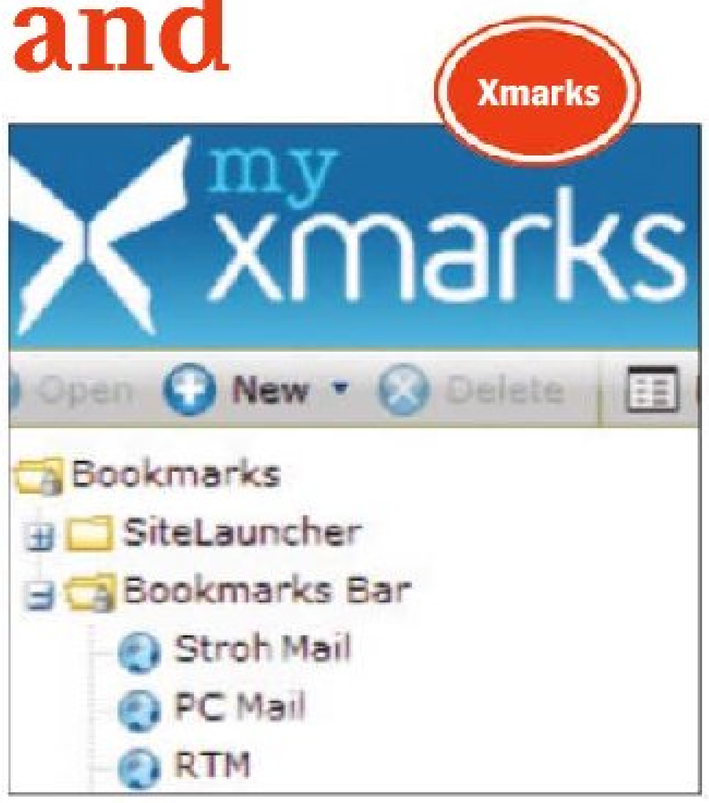
You already know that Amazon sells darn near everything you could ever want. But if you're hoping to nab stuff at deep discounts, you'll need to do a little surfing. **Groupon** (free, groupon.com) uses the power of numbers to present outrageous discounts on products and services available in your local area. When enough people commit to buying, the deal is on.

For used stuff in your region, **Craigslist** (free, craigslist.org) remains the go-to site. If you know how to browse classified ads, you know how to find bargains—not to mention amazing free stuff—on Craigslist.

Getting a good deal from a reliable contractor is often more difficult than it should be. **Angie's List** ($29 per year, angieslist.com) provides reviews and ratings of contractors and service providers in your area, written by people who have actually used them. Think of the site as the *Consumer Reports* of home services. Angie's List is entirely supported by its user fees, so the site doesn't take any money from the companies and contractors it rates.

If you're looking for something unique, **Etsy** (free, etsy.com) has thousands of cool, handmade, and vintage things for sale. If you're not in the market for a macramé iPhone cozy, digging up the really good stuff can take some time. But Etsy rewards those visitors who make the effort to search.

Bookmark and Password Sync



Several tools, plug-ins, and add-ons out there promise to help you keep your bookmarks and passwords in sync, but only one makes it onto our list. **Xmarks** (free, Premium upgrade $12 per year; xmarks.com) synchronizes all your bookmarks and saved passwords among Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome, and Safari. It permits you to create distinct profiles so that you can have one set of bookmarks for home and another set for work, and you can change profiles on the fly. Xmarks is a must-have add-on for every Web user. »

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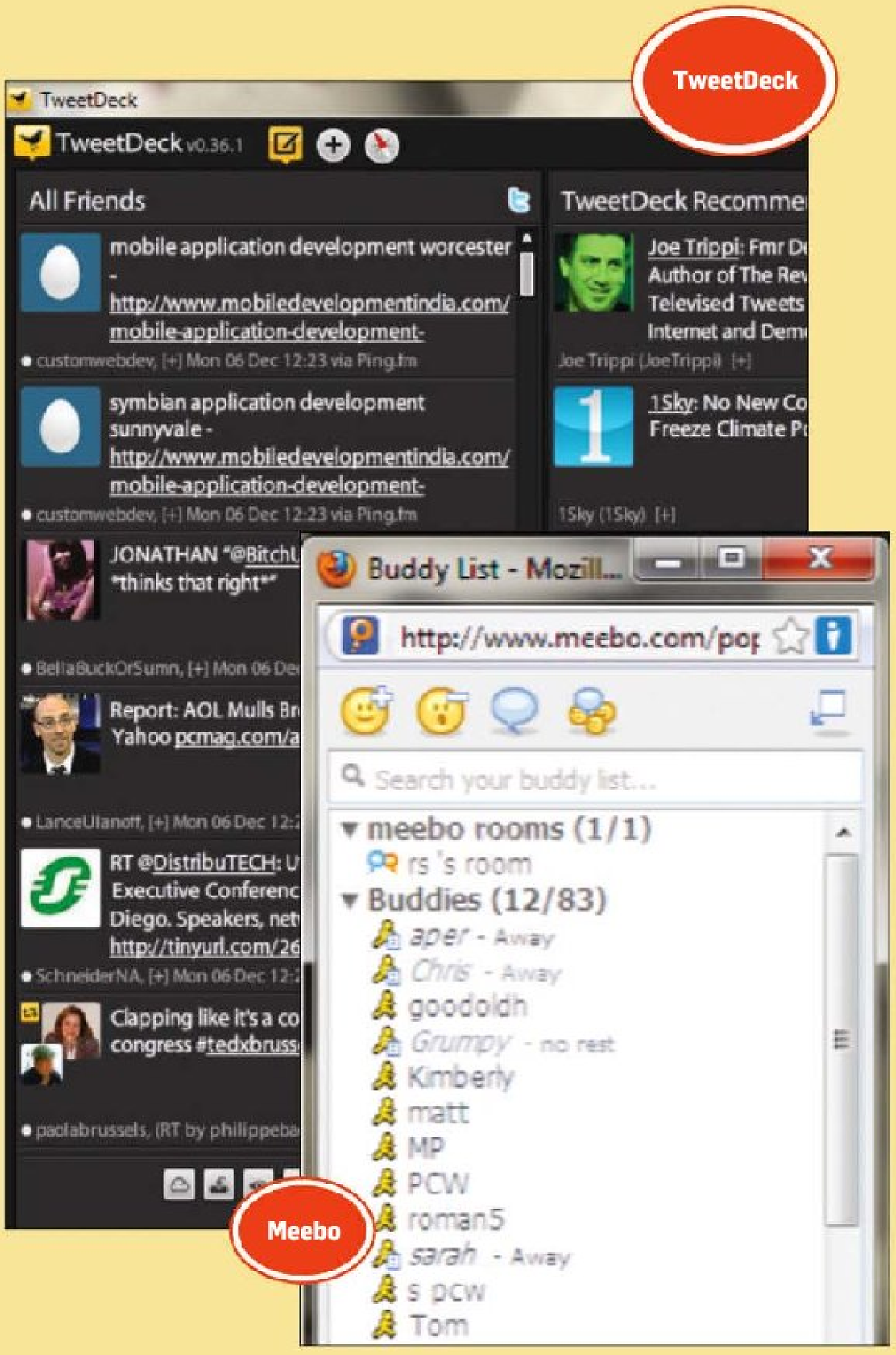


Social Sites and Aggregators

You already use Facebook. (And if you don't, what's wrong with you?) You're probably on LinkedIn and Twitter. But you likely also have IM accounts to manage, too. Keeping all of that straight requires some good software.

We love **TweetDeck** (tweetdeck.com) for managing Facebook, Foursquare, Google Buzz, LinkedIn, MySpace, and Twitter all under one roof. TweetDeck is free, it offers desktop and mobile clients for every platform, and it allows you to schedule updates for posting automatically.

For instant messaging on just about any network, the free **Meebo** (meebo.com) is terrific. It runs in your browser, so you can log in from anywhere.

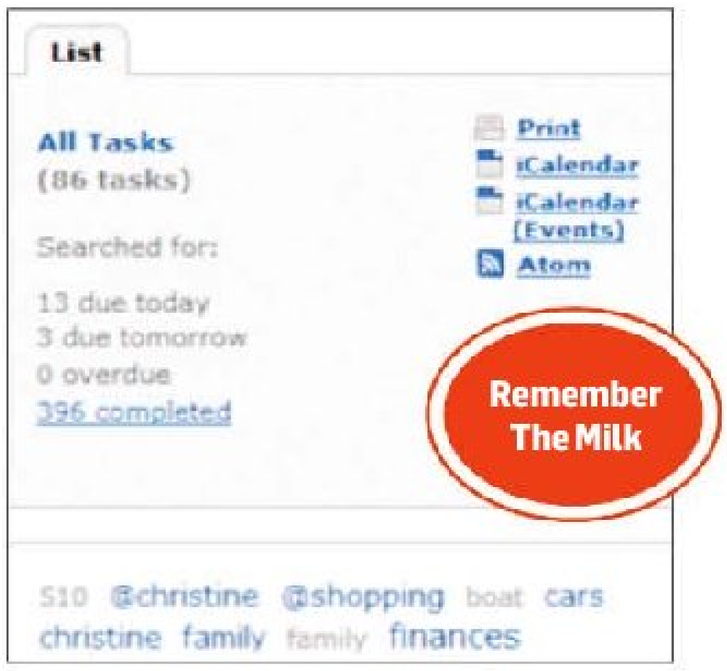
Thanks to Facebook, few people bother to maintain a traditional blog anymore. But when you want to post something for the world to see, be sure to use **Posterous** (posterous.com) or **Tumblr** (tumblr.com). For this purpose, these free services are nearly interchangeable, and both are extremely simple to use. And you can e-mail your new blog posts straight from your phone on the fly.

Calendar and To-Do

Here's an easy one: **Google Calendar** (calendar.google.com) is free and massively robust, and it integrates with Gmail. You can create as many separate calendars as you require, and you can share those calendars with anyone.

Although Google Calendar includes a task-list feature, it's too simple for our liking. We prefer **Remember The Milk** (free, rememberthemilk.com), which also plugs into Google Calendar, Gmail, and a bunch of other services. Remember The Milk's flexible design makes it great for everything from simple grocery lists to exhaustive Getting Things Done life management. For $25 a year, you also get to use RTM's excellent mobile apps for iPhone and Android.

If you want something more structured than Remember The Milk, **Toodledo** (free, toodledo.com) is an excellent task and project management system. It integrates with a wide assortment of mobile apps for Android, iPhone, and iPad.



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Battle of the SECURITY SUPERPOWERS

We tested the 10 top security packages to see which ones can protect your data without overburdening your PC. Here are the exclusive rankings from the PCWorld Labs. »

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It's no longer enough for antivirus software to scan files on your PC. You need someone looking over your shoulder and telling you whether it's safe to click that link; whether the popup for that software update is legitimate; and whether that download from your favorite social network is actually a tool created by organized criminals for stealing your personal information. You need an all-in-one Internet security suite capable of identifying, blocking, and cleaning up after a wide array of malware.

We examined 13 security suites for this story (for full reviews of all 13 suites, see find.pcworld.com/71140). To handle our expanded Internet security testing, *PCWorld* contracted for the services of AV-Test.org, a respected security testing company. We looked at traditional signature-based detection (which indicates how well products can block known malware) and at how well the suites cleaned infections and blocked brand-new, live malware attacks.

In many respects, the suites we looked at

LAB TESTED

TOP 10 SECURITY SUITES FOR

	PAID ANTIVIRUS PROGRAM	PCW Rating	Signature-based malware detection	Antivirus/antispyware detection: Real-world malware blocking: Fully blocked attacks	Antivirus/antispyware detection: Real-world malware blocking: Partially blocked attacks	Successful cleanup of active malware components[1,2]	Scan speed (in seconds)[3]: On demand[1]	Scan speed (in seconds)[3]: On access[1]	
1	Symantec Norton Internet Security 2011 **$70 for one year/three PCs** find.pcworld.com/71129	★★★★½ SUPERIOR	98.7%	96.0%	4.0%	80%	126	291	
2	Kaspersky Internet Security 2011 **$80 for one year/three PCs** find.pcworld.com/71130	★★★★½ SUPERIOR	95.7%	92.0%	0.0%	80%	109	315	
3	BitDefender Internet Security 2011 **$60 for one year/three PCs** find.pcworld.com/71131	★★★★½ SUPERIOR	97.5%	68.0%	20.0%	80%	131	305	
4	PC Tools Internet Security 2011 **$50 for one year/three PCs** find.pcworld.com/71132	★★★★½ SUPERIOR	97.7%	88.0%	8.0%	80%	283	200	
5	G-Data Internet Security 2011 **$60 for one year/three PCs** find.pcworld.com/71133	★★★★ VERY GOOD	99.4%	84.0%	4.0%	80%	111	342	
6	F-Secure Internet Security 2011 **$60 for one year/three PCs** find.pcworld.com/71134	★★★★ VERY GOOD	98.1%	88.0%	8.0%	80%	208	519	
7	Trend Micro Titanium Internet Security 2011 **$70 for one year/three PCs** find.pcworld.com/71135	★★★★ VERY GOOD	98.4%	88.0%	8.0%	80%	187	249	
8	Panda Internet Security 2011 **$60 for one year/one PC** find.pcworld.com/71136	★★★★ VERY GOOD	99.8%	84.0%	12.0%	80%	258	366	
9	Eset Smart Security 4.2 **$90 for one year/three PCs** find.pcworld.com/71138	★★★½ VERY GOOD	89.2%	84.0%	0.0%	60%	90	240	
10	Avira AntiVir Premium Security Suite **$78 for one year/three PCs** find.pcworld.com/71137	★★★½ VERY GOOD	99.0%	84.0%	8.0%	80%	98	260	

CHART NOTES: Prices as of 12/12/10. [1]Test conducted at default settings. [2]Does not include removal of Registry changes or inert files. [3]Time to scan 4500MB of data; lower numbers are better.

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produced closely bunched results, but they did vary in the efficacy of their protection and in the extra features they offered. Ultimately, we picked Symantec's Norton Internet Security 2011—the most balanced of the suites—as our overall winner.

New Threats for a New Year

Malware has migrated to social networks, so this year's Internet security suites put more emphasis on stopping Web-based attacks. Norton Internet Security 2011, for example, has Norton Safe Web, a feature that hooks into your Facebook stream (with your permission) to scan your Facebook links and proactively block malicious ones.

Other suites this year look for techniques that cybercriminals use in attempts to poison SEO (search engine optimization), loading up on popular search keywords to make malware-compromised sites appear higher in search results. A suite may flag any such sites in search results as unsafe or questionable.

Another threat is the resurgence of banking-related malware. Though some suites protect against certain types of banking-specific malware, no suite targets the relatively new "man-in-the-browser" attacks, in which the malware doesn't activate until you have successfully logged into your bank account.

Practically all suites offer some method to prevent malware from downloading through your browser without your consent. For example, a Website might pop up a fraudulent warning that your PC is infected and that you must buy a particular (but fake) antivirus program to remove it. Or it might trick you into downloading Trojan horses disguised as the latest version of Adobe Reader or Flash. Most security suites now monitor browser downloads and filter out this bogus software.

Comodo Internet Security 2011 Complete (which did not capture a spot in our Top 10 chart) and the Kaspersky and Norton suites offered the best detection in our "real world" malicious downloads tests, which gauge how well the various suites block brand-new, as-yet unknown malware.

Improved from last year is Norton Insight, which measures the relative trustworthiness of the files loaded on your desktop. The idea is that crowd-sourcing safe files (letting consumers around the world rate a file's safety) is better than whitelisting them (depending on a static list of acceptable files).

Crowd-sourcing is also behind so-called cloud-based detection of new malware. Security software reports suspect new files from a PC to the cloud and creates antimalware signatures as needed. In 2011, BitDefender, Comodo, and others join cloud pioneers McAfee, Norton, Panda, and Trend Micro.

All 13 of the security suites we reviewed offer at least antivirus, antispyware, and antispam components, plus a firewall. Some, such as Eset Smart Security 4 and PC Tools Internet Security 2011, had little more. The others provide additional capabilities—parental controls, gaming features (such as a "silent mode" that won't interrupt a game with alerts), and online backup (useful if malware ever nukes your PC).

A few products also boasted "sandbox" features that run a new app within a protected environment so that if it turns out to be malicious, it can't infect your operating system. In 2011, Avast, Comodo, and Kaspersky all offer this feature.

Performance Issues

Many users worry that a security suite will slow their PC. This year, AV-Test ran a battery of tests to address that concern, looking at a number of key aspects of a suite's impact on PC performance—including boot time, application launch time, file copy operations, application installation time, and file compression, among others. AV-Test also looked at how quickly each suite scanned a PC for viruses and other malware.

The overall score for each suite takes into account various aspects of malware detection, blocking, and cleanup; the feature set; and ease of use. However, malware detection, blocking, and cleanup account for the lion's share of the scoring.

Symantec Norton Internet Security 2011

No longer the bloated, slow, and crash-prone monstrosity of yore, Symantec's security suite ($70 for a one-year, three-PC license) is now a streamlined and extremely effective antimalware application that continues to update and advance its interface and its detection rates incrementally.

The NIS 2011 interface can initially be overwhelming, but you can ignore much of it. Almost everything is switched on by default, and under those default settings it was one of the most secure and effective antimalware apps we tested. »

2011

	Design score	Bottom line
	Very Good	Norton's nicely designed suite does an excellent job of fully blocking and cleaning up active malware.
	Good	Kaspersky Internet Security 2011 provides solid defense against malware and has a friendly interface.
	Very Good	BitDefender's multiple-mode interface is overcomplicated, but this full-featured suite blocks malware effectively.
	Fair	While PCTools Internet Security performs superbly at blocking malware, it is hobbled by slow scan speeds.
	Fair	G-Data posted high marks for its ability to detect known malware; however, it didn't catch some new threats.
	Very Good	F-Secure Internet Security was reasonably successful at blocking threats and is easy to use, but scans slowly.
	Good	Trend Micro Titanium Internet Security is a good defender, but this package is light on extra features.
	Very Good	Panda's 2011 security suite is generally effective, though its blocking of new malware wasn't top-notch.
	Very Good	Eset Smart Security 4 is speedy; unfortunately, it struggled at detecting and removing malware.
	Fair	Avira AntiVir is very good at blocking known malware, but it left behind more malware remnants than most suites.

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Norton Internet Security 2011's numbers were solid across the board: It fully blocked 24 of 25 real-world attacks—tying for the best mark in the pack—and it detected 98.7 percent of samples of known malware, another excellent result. False positives were near zero, and the suite's overall speed, while not exemplary, was acceptable. It tied for the top score in removing active malware components (at 80 percent), and its combined rating for security and performance put it in first place.

An especially impressive add-on we should mention is the Norton Identity Safe password manager, part of the suite's Web browser toolbar, installed by default. It's one of those utilities that you soon can't live without.

Kaspersky Internet Security 2011

Known for being a power-user's antimalware tool, Kaspersky has quietly developed its suite ($80 for a one-year, three-PC license) into a somewhat kinder, gentler application that's more suitable for the masses.

But the company has not traded down on its well-known rock-solid security. Its overall performance rating in our tests earned it second place, behind only Norton's top ranking.

Across the board, Kaspersky's figures were good but not perfect. It blocked 23 out of 25 of real-world attacks—a very good score, but behind the leaders—and it detected 95.7 percent of known, recently released malware, which is par for the course. Kaspersky was above average at avoiding false positives, and it was nearly tops at removing malware from an already infected machine. Finally, it earned solid marks for performance in both on-demand and on-access system scanning. (The on-access scanner kicks off when you open or save a file to disk; you launch an on-demand scan manually.)

Regrettably, installation is a headache. After downloading an initial 100MB file from the company's Website, we were prompted midway through the installation to download an update—another 100MB file—via a rather convoluted process. We feel that such updates shouldn't mean downloading an entirely new set of installation files. And Kaspersky won't install at all unless you register your copy with an e-mail address.

Still, we were happy to see a couple of uncommon add-ons. One is a Safe Run for Applications mode, a sandbox system that lets you run potentially dangerous apps without fear of infecting the machine. This isn't the fastest process around; but if it's a tool you think you'll need, it can be a real savior. A second useful extra feature is the app's Anti-Banner system, which effectively scrubs ads from your Web browser while you surf.

BitDefender Internet Security 2011

BitDefender Internet Security 2011 ($60 for a one-year, three-PC license) tries to cover both casual and power users. Unique among security apps, it offers three different interface views: basic, intermediate, and expert, with everything laid bare.

Most users are likely to find the basic view too basic, while true novices may have difficulty finding the option for immediately scanning their PC (it lurks beneath a large box labeled 'Security'). The intermediate view is reminiscent of an icon-based smartphone interface that the user can arrange. And then there's the overwhelming expert mode and its advanced configuration options.

BitDefender's overall protection levels are very good, but short of the highest tier of products we reviewed. »

RAM HOGS

LAB TESTED

BESIDES MALWARE DETECTION and blocking tests, we also run tests to determine how a suite will affect your PC's speed. Here are the suites we tested that use the most and least memory.

HIGHEST TOTAL MEMORY USE	Real memory use (MB)	Virtual memory use (MB)[1]	Total—real + virtual (MB)
PC Tools	77.3	281.1	358.4
G-Data	38.2	273.3	311.5
BitDefender	35.4	253.2	288.6
LOWEST TOTAL MEMORY USE	**Real memory use (MB)**	**Virtual memory use (MB)[1]**	**Total—real + virtual (MB)**
Trend Micro	3.7	17.1	20.8
Norton	26.8	28.2	55.0
Kaspersky	35.3	70.4	105.7

CHART NOTE: [1]Virtual memory is information kept on the hard drive instead of in RAM.

***Norton* is a very effective, streamlined antimalware application. You probably won't need to fiddle with its default settings.**

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In our tests, BitDefender stopped 22 of 25 real-world attacks and turned away 97.5 percent of known malware in traditional detection tests. Those figures are good, but the top-scoring products blocked 24 of 25 real-world attacks, and hit 99 percent or higher on the traditional detection tests.

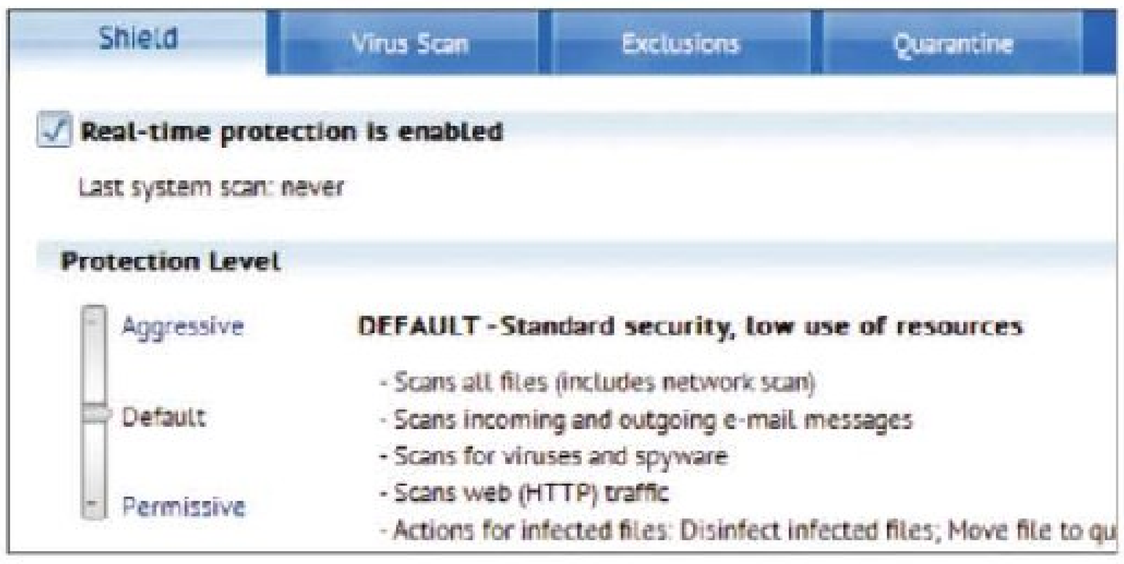
The BitDefender suite excelled at avoiding false positives: It had none in our tests, and it tied with PC Tools for the best overall success at fixing infected systems, removing active malware components in 80 percent of infections, and removing all traces 70 percent of the time. But while its on-demand and on-access scan speeds were acceptable, having BitDefender installed will slow your computer considerably: Of the 13 products we tested, BitDefender was second worst in the amount of lag it generated.

Other issues with BitDefender: It requires registration and activation during installation, and setup entails clicking through screen after screen.

BitDefender was noticeably sluggish at everything it did. Full system scans took well over an hour; and during one scan, our test PC crashed. We could also do without its pop-ups.

BitDefender is something of a budget option. Its interface could be simpler, but it does the job well and it's a good fit for most users.

Kaspersky **has its design quirks and is relatively pricey, but it offers solid protection and some nice extras.**



BitDefender **is a full-featured suite and blocks malware well, but it has an overcomplicated interface.**

PCTools **did the best job of fixing infected systems; however, its on-demand scans are slow, and it also makes a PC sluggish.**

PC Tools Internet Security 2011

Does slow and steady win the race? PC Tools' answer is a definite yes: Get the system clean, no matter how long it takes.

We found PC Tools Internet Security 2011's scanning performance to be quite good, as it blocked 24 out of 25 real-world attacks (tying for the top mark on this test) and detected an above-average 97.7 percent of zoo malware. In our tests, PC Tools produced virtually no false positives; and it tied with a number of other security suites for the highest score in removing active malware components (with an 80 percent success rate). Most impressively, it removed all traces of infections 70 percent of the time, earning it the distinction of being the strongest performer in that particular test.

But PC Tools takes its sweet time. Its on-demand scan speed ranked 12th among the 13 suites we evaluated, and it had the most severe impact on system performance of the products we tested, slowing computers down considerably.

Paradoxically, on-access scanning with PC Tools is quite spry. In fact, it was the fastest at performing these automatic file-by-file scans of all the security suites we tested.

Getting around in PC Tools Internet Security is simple. Four big status buttons tell you whether you're safe from malware and spam, and whether your firewall is engaged; and settings are easy to access, with appropriate configuration options.

Given PC Tools' bargain-bin pricing ($50 for a one-year, three-PC license, making it nearly the cheapest application we tested) and its solid security performance, the suite is tempting. So go for it—as long as you don't need to use your computer for anything else while the software is scanning.

G-Data Internet Security 2011

The G-Data suite ($40 for one year, one PC; $60 for one year, three PCs) is not designed for novices. Though it stops viruses capably, its complexity, cluttered interface, and overly scary warnings make it inappropriate for inexperienced users.

The interface is instantly confusing, with too much »

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Intel® Core™ i7 Processor

i7	(8MB L3 Cache, 1066Mhz)	
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	i7-870 2.93Ghz	$ 795
i5	i5-760 2.80Ghz	$ 706
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information, and is organized haphazardly. It's not hard to figure out how to run a manual system scan, but if you want to tweak your settings, good luck. The main screen features three different 'Options' buttons plus three 'Change settings' options, the latter trio buried under a couple of hazy tabs at the bottom. But you'll soon discover that all too few of the options and settings can actually be changed.

Another drawback of G-Data is that it seems to use more than its fair share of system resources while it's working. A full system scan—which took nearly an hour in a hands-on test—led to fans whirring at full tilt. G-Data's own CPU load readout often showed 100 percent usage during scans. Still, in our formal lab testing, G-Data performed reasonably well in scan speed and overall impact on system resources, so results may vary widely from one machine to the next.

Other quirks of the suite bugged us. We couldn't use the program without generating a disturbing warning notifying us that the WPA2-PSK wireless network we were accessing was "unsecure," because G-Data deemed the passphrase too short (it had to be at least 20 characters long—overkill).

G-Data would rank as an also-ran except that it really does offer a superior level of security, turning in the third-best performance figures in our tests. It fully blocked a solid 21 of 25 real-world attacks, and zapped 99.4 percent of known malware samples—one of the top scores on that test. Its accumulation of false positives: None. And its 80 percent success rate at cleaning up active infections was near the top of the chart.

G-Data is hard for novices to use, and it may issue some scary warnings, especially if you're on a wireless network.

We appreciated the software's extras, such as parental controls and an app that writes over deleted files several times to make them impossible to recover. (You must choose to install these when you set up the program, however; you can't enable them later.)

Nevertheless, the G-Data suite remains quite difficult to use, its processor usage is significant, and it's saddled with several poor design quirks.

F-Secure Internet Security 2011

Simple, simple, simple. That's F-Secure's marching order. Costing $60 for one year and three PCs, it focuses on safeguarding the computers of novices and especially of families.

Even before the software is installed, you are asked to configure parental controls and set an access password, which is used to change settings. Keeping things simple, the F-Secure home screen provides just six options to choose from, so even the most oblivious novice should be able to figure out how to get around its interface. One minor complaint: By default, clicking the Scan button runs only a quick scan; you have to use the pull-down arrow to run a full scan of your PC.

F-Secure was an also-ran in prior years, but for its 2011 release, the company has stepped up its game. In our tests, the software fully blocked 22 of 25 real-world attacks (it partially blocked two others), and it detected 98.1 percent of known malware. False positives? Absolutely none. And its 80 percent success rate at disinfecting active malware components on infected PCs put it among the top performers.

Though F-Secure barely slowed our test systems during background operation, it was terribly slow at on-access scans, finishing dismally in last place for the time it took to scan a file »

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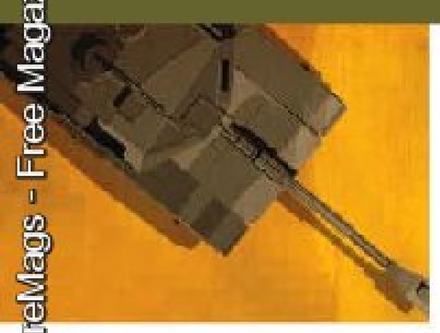

TESTING IN THE REAL WILD WORLD

LAB TESTED

THE MALWARE THREAT landscape is ever-evolving, with many thousands of new pieces of malware each year, and with cybercriminals developing new attack methods. As a result, security products—and our methods of testing them—must evolve too.

When reviewing security suites and antivirus software, *PCWorld* works with AV-Test (av-test.org), a respected security testing lab based in Germany. AV-Test looks at various aspects of a security product's ability to detect and block malware, including its ability to stop both known and unknown threats.

This year, AV-Test has introduced "real world" malware-blocking tests that put antivirus software up against real, live malware found online, not lab samples—a good way to measure how well a security product can detect new malware.

Among the security suites we reviewed, Symantec's Norton Internet Security 2010 performed the best on this test, fully blocking 96 percent of real-world attacks, and partially blocking the remaining 4 percent.

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as it opened. It was marginally faster at on-demand scanning.

F-Secure has one of the most spartan help systems of any application we tested—it consists of a handful of entries in help trees, with zero documentation aside from a browser-based tutorial. On the other hand, we can't imagine the suite's users actually needing to refer to the documentation.

F-Secure's speed problems are seriously troubling, and the suite left behind some code remnants after we uninstalled it. However, those are really the only sore spots in what is otherwise an impressive and worthwhile security suite.

Trend Micro Titanium Internet Security 2011

With Titanium Internet Security 2011 ($70 for one year, three PCs), Trend Micro takes minimalism to an extreme. The user interface is one of the most basic and stripped-down of any we tested. A simple summary of threats blocked, a link to the parental controls, and the date your subscription expires are all that the primary display offers. Below that, you can choose to scan your system, configure options, or check your logs. A large blue 'Tools' button is a red herring: It tells you only whether parental controls and "data theft prevention" are on.

Rather than giving users myriad options to choose from, Trend Micro defaults everything to a middle level of protection, and you'll probably leave its settings there.

In our tests of its effectiveness, Titanium Internet Security produced exceptional but not quite top-of-the-line results, fully blocking 22 of 25 real-world attacks (and partially blocking two others) and detecting 98.4 percent of known malware. Its false-positive count (just 0.0006 percent) is very good, as is its success rate at fixing infected machines (80 percent).

On-access scan speed was quite good, but on-demand scans were among the slowest we saw. (If you're running a full system scan, do it while you're sleeping; even lunch hour isn't long enough.)

Titanium's installation is rabid about requiring you to register; it also manages to hide the field where you input your license key very effectively (hint: it's in the system tray). By default Titanium runs a Quick Scan—a scan so cursory that it looked at only 11 files on our test unit.

The protection and simplicity of Trend Micro's offering make it worth a look.

F-Secure **keeps things simple in its interface (it's easy to use), but it scans very slowly.**

Trend Micro **offers good protection; it's light on extra features, however, and it has a minimalist user interface.**

Panda Internet Security 2011

Panda's suite ($60 for one year, one PC; $70 for one year, three PCs) offers very good protection. Its 99.8 percent detection rate for known malware was tops among the 13 apps we tested. In our real-world malware blocking tests, it completely stopped 21 of 25 attacks and partly blocked three more. It also removed 80 percent of active malware components.

But that security comes at a price: Panda is rife with false positives, and it scans slowly. It turned in unusually poor marks for both on-demand and on-access scans, and Panda's adverse impact on system speed was larger than average.

Very cautious users may be willing to trade some system performance for rock-solid security, but we imagine that they'll be less than thrilled with Panda's convoluted and badly-designed interface.

Sometimes it seems as though you »

Panda **spots known malware superbly, but it's slow and has a penchant for ringing up false positives.**

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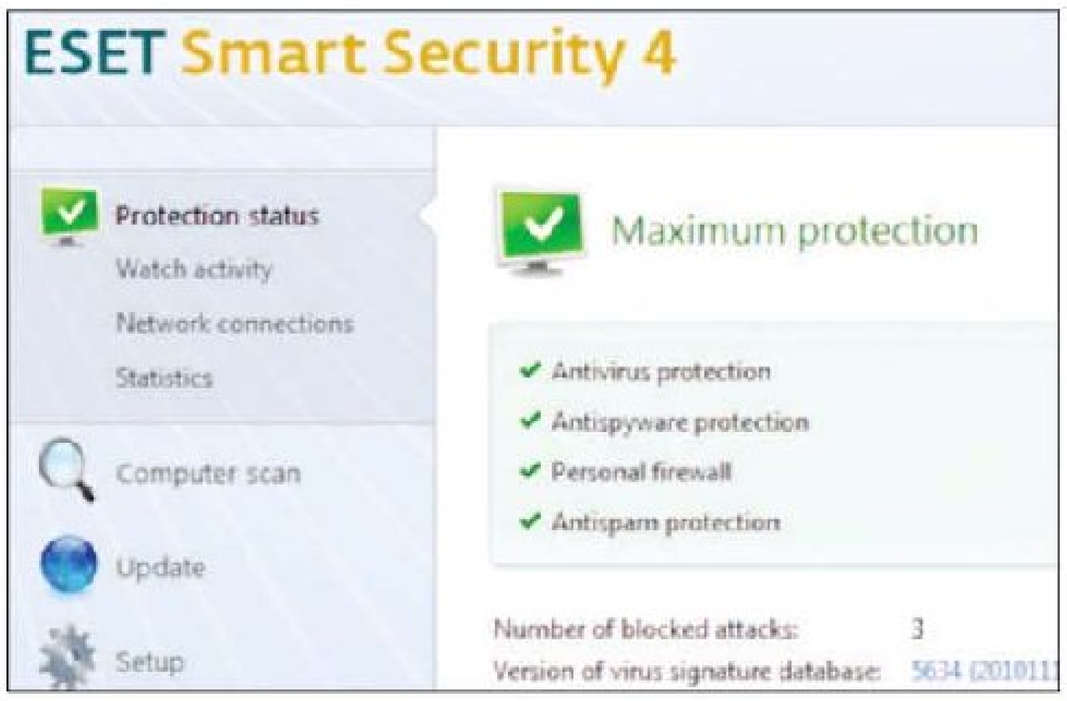
can do nothing in Panda with one click or—at times—without a restart. Even updating the software requires a reboot.

Then consider Panda's language barrier (the company is based in Spain). The interface and dialog boxes are studded with poor or stilted English.

Should Panda find something it deems awry, be prepared for some histrionics. Immediately after installing the suite, we were greeted with a blazing alert announcing "Wi-Fi intruder detected" along with its MAC address. In reality, it was TiVo jumping on the Web for an update.



Eset **undercuts its speed with a poor record at blocking known malware and an abysmal download and installation process.**

Eset Smart Security 4.2

Eset Smart Security 4.2 ($90 for one year, one PC; $70 for one year, three PCs) finished at or near the back of the pack in most of our malware detection, blocking, and disinfection tests.

Though it fully blocked 21 of 25 real-world attacks (okay, but not outstanding), it stopped only 89.2 percent of known malware—significantly lower than the average-performing products in this roundup. Eset's 60 percent success rate at removing active malware landed it in a tie for last place on that measure. It also tied for leaving the largest amount of inert malware remnants behind.

At least Eset is fast: It was the quickest suite in our roundup at on-demand scanning, and it scored a solid second place in on-access scans. System performance barely slowed with Eset installed; its rating was good enough for third place among the 13 apps we reviewed. Eset deserves recognition for keeping the false positives to a bare minimum, as well.

However, Eset has serious drawbacks. Its download and installation process was the most aggravating of all the apps we reviewed, as you're required to register and enter Eset-provided user names and passwords again and again.

The home screen is simplified to a fault, with few options available. But under the hood you'll see an exhaustive tree of option after option that even experts would find off-putting and convoluted. And you'll likely have to venture into this no-man's-land in relatively short order: Eset does not give you an option for a complete system scan on the home screen at all. You must configure it via a badly labeled ('Selected profile') drop-down menu found only on the options screen.

Eset's claim to offer two home screens—one for experts and one for beginners—is misleading too: If you toggle the system from 'Standard mode' to 'Advanced mode', the only difference you'll see is the addition of one new option on the taskbar: The newcomer, 'Tools', enables you to look at log files, the quarantine list, and so on.

Avira **does well at blocking known malware, but in cleanup efforts, it leaves behind too many code remnants.**

Eset Smart Security 4.2 features such a rare and unfortunate combination of poor security and baffling settings that it's impossible to recommend, no matter how fast it is.

Avira AntiVir Premium Security Suite

Avira has long offered a no-cost version for personal use. Upgrading to the paid Avira AntiVir Premium Security Suite ($78 for one year, three PCs) adds a multitude of extra features—a firewall and parental controls, for instance—but the core malware detection and removal system remains the same.

Avira's standard mode should be plenty for most users and provides more than enough tweakability. Or you can check the 'Expert mode' box—easy to overlook—and delve into the software's minutiae. The default settings will be absolutely fine for most users, and only if you need to do a manual scan will you want to open Avira's control panel.

Across the board, Avira turned in very good numbers, blocking 99.0 percent of known malware, and fully stopping 21 of 25 of real-world attacks (it partially blocked two other attacks). On top of that, it was the second-fastest on-demand scanner and the fourth-fastest on-access scanner we tested.

Despite disinfecting active malware components well, Avira left behind more remnants than most other suites. It also lost points for false positives: Its behavioral detection engine blocked 10 percent of all safe (yet suspicious) applications in our tests. It blocked practically every autorun app it encountered, too, whether on an optical disc or a thumb drive.

These issues lowered this otherwise decent app's score.

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BY TIM MOYNIHAN
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Android 2.3 Gingerbread (and Beyond)

The most recent release of Google's Android mobile operating system—code-named Gingerbread—may be looking to replace your credit card. Android 2.3 is the first iteration of the OS to support near-field communication (NFC) chips, meaning that you could use a smartphone running Gingerbread as a "swipable" payment device.

Among Gingerbread's other intriguing new features are native support for Voice-over-IP calling, manual control over front-facing and back-facing cameras, simpler cut-and-paste controls, and improved power management.

The Samsung Nexus S (pictured at right, and available both unlocked and in combination with a T-Mobile contract) is the first cell phone to offer Gingerbread out of the box, but it most assuredly won't be the last. Prepare for a wave of Android 2.3–loaded smartphones to reach stores by the middle of 2011 and perhaps earlier.

Also on the way is a tablet-specific version of the Android operating system—Android 3.0 ("Honeycomb")—which Google recently demonstrated on an unannounced, iPad-like Motorola tablet at the D: Dive Into Mobile Conference in San Francisco. Will devices powered by Honeycomb make up ground on Apple's runaway iPad market share? That outcome certainly seems possible, as long as the devices themselves are up to snuff.

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Panasonic Lumix DMC-GF2

The Micro Four-Thirds system of interchangeable-lens compact cameras continues to evolve, and the Panasonic Lumix GF2 represents an impressive combination of the camera line's best features: It's small, it boasts lightning-fast autofocus, it has both touchscreen and hardware controls for focusing and menu navigation, and it shoots 3D still images when paired with Panasonic's separately sold H-FT012 3D lens. Throw in a pop-up flash and the ability to record 1920-by-1080 AVCHD video at 60 interlaced frames per second, and this portable powerhouse qualifies as a worthy rival to the similarly slim Sony Alpha NEX-5.

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LTE Networks

The next generation of wireless networks is upon us. Sprint was the first major carrier to offer 4G (WiMax) service in the United States, but Long Term Evolution—the flavor of 4G that is most likely to dominate the market for high-speed wireless—has only recently begun to roll out. Verizon activated the service in 39 cities on December 5, and the carrier claims that the new network will pump out download speeds of between 5 megabits per second and 12 mbps—ten times as fast as 3G data service. Verizon LTE should be available in virtually all U.S. markets by the end of 2013.

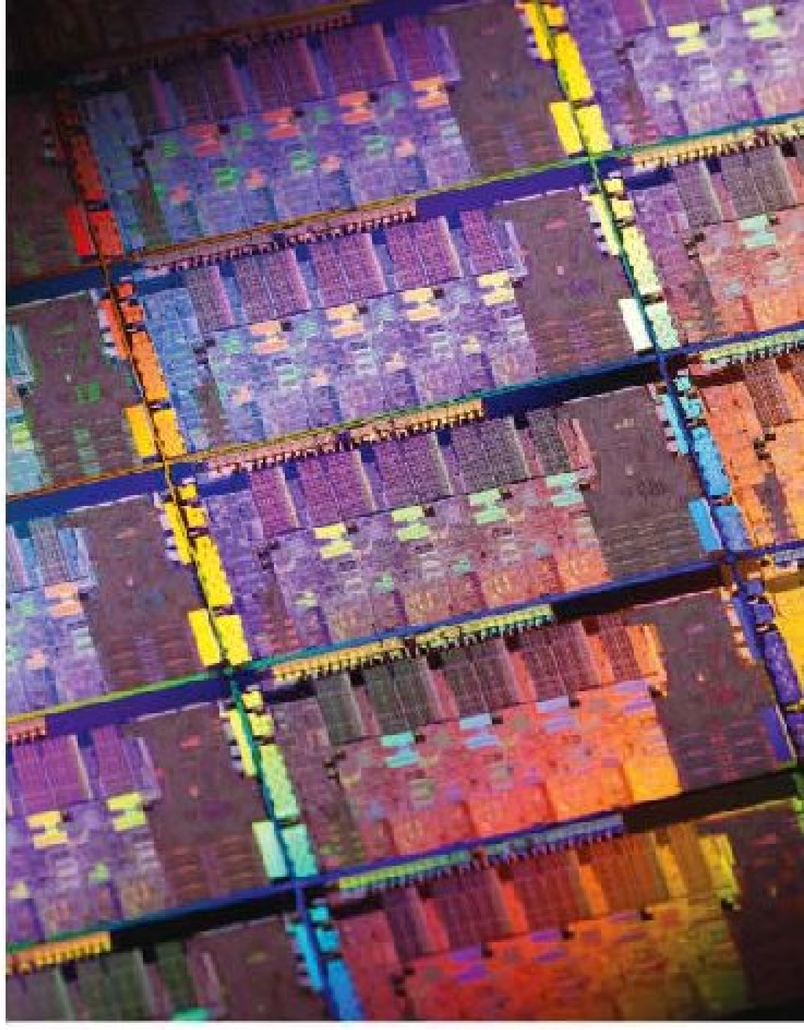
Right now consumers can access LTE service on their laptop using a 3G/4G USB stick from Verizon. No LTE phones are available yet, though rumors abound that the first will be announced at CES 2011 in January (after this issue goes to press). Verizon says that the first LTE phones for its network will go on sale by mid-2011. Beyond that, LTE radios will begin showing up in all kinds of mobile devices, from tablets to video cameras.

LTE service will make existing mobile apps run much faster. The picture quality of streaming video will improve significantly. Videoconferencing will be smoother. Downloading files and loading Web pages will be far less tedious. Verizon and other service providers hope that many new apps capable of fully exploiting 4G speeds will emerge.

LTE networks also operate on a lower-frequency spectrum band, and they use advanced antenna technology to move the signal into places where a 3G signal can't easily go.

That capability will enable LTE networks to connect fast-moving automobiles, which may open up a new field of wireless apps for in-car use. LTE will also permit entire networks of outdoor advertising (such as bus-stop ads) to stream video advertising.

Since an LTE signal is more reliable than a 3G data signal, it may let you replace your home's DSL or cable connection with a mobile hotspot for home and mobile devices.



Intel Sandy Bridge

Intel's next generation of Core i5 and i7 processors, code-named Sandy Bridge, represents a significant step forward. A new CPU core brings revised vector instructions and emphasizes energy efficiency, too. The new integrated GPU, built into the silicon along with the CPU, may be Sandy Bridge's most important advance. The processor is dramatically faster and more capable than anything Intel has shipped before. »

Eye-Fi Direct Mode

Eye-Fi's next-generation wireless SD Card might help dedicated digital cameras recapture market share from camera-equipped cell phones—with a little smartphone help. The Eye-Fi's new Direct Mode creates a link between a camera and a cell phone, transferring photos in real time from the camera to the handset. And though the peer-to-peer connection is based on Wi-Fi, you don't need a hotspot to make the camera-to-phone transfer.

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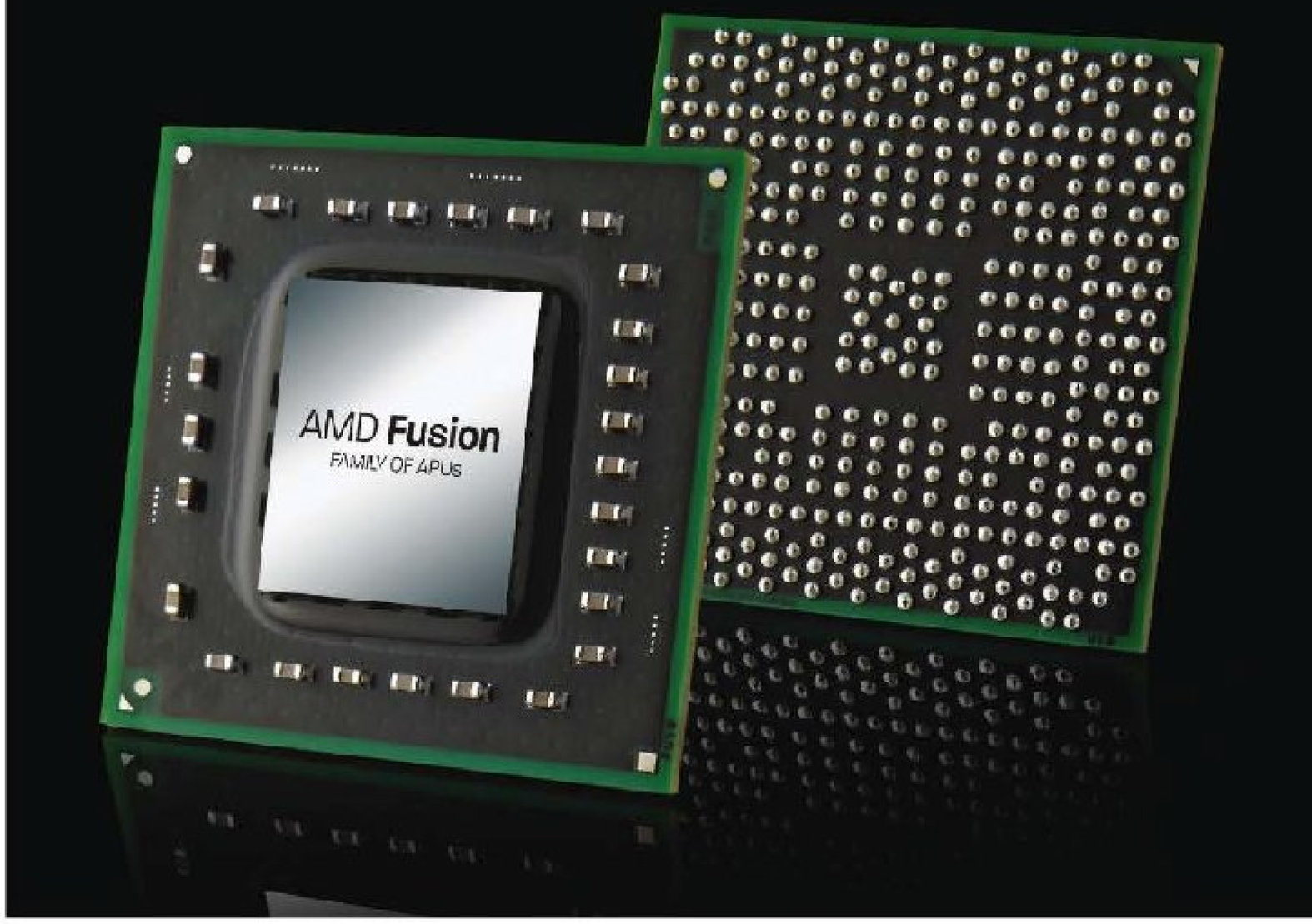
Google Chrome OS

Designed for portability, speed, and security, Google Chrome OS will rely almost entirely on Web apps and cloud-based storage. For an app preview, check out the Chrome Web Store (find.pcworld.com/71125).

Chrome OS won't officially hit the market until mid-2011, but Google is running a pilot program where you can apply to get a CR-48, the first Chrome OS laptop. This 12.1-inch, 3G-equipped notebook comes with a Webcam, a solid-state drive, and a battery life of 8 hours; it's likely to serve as a model for future Chrome OS–based machines.

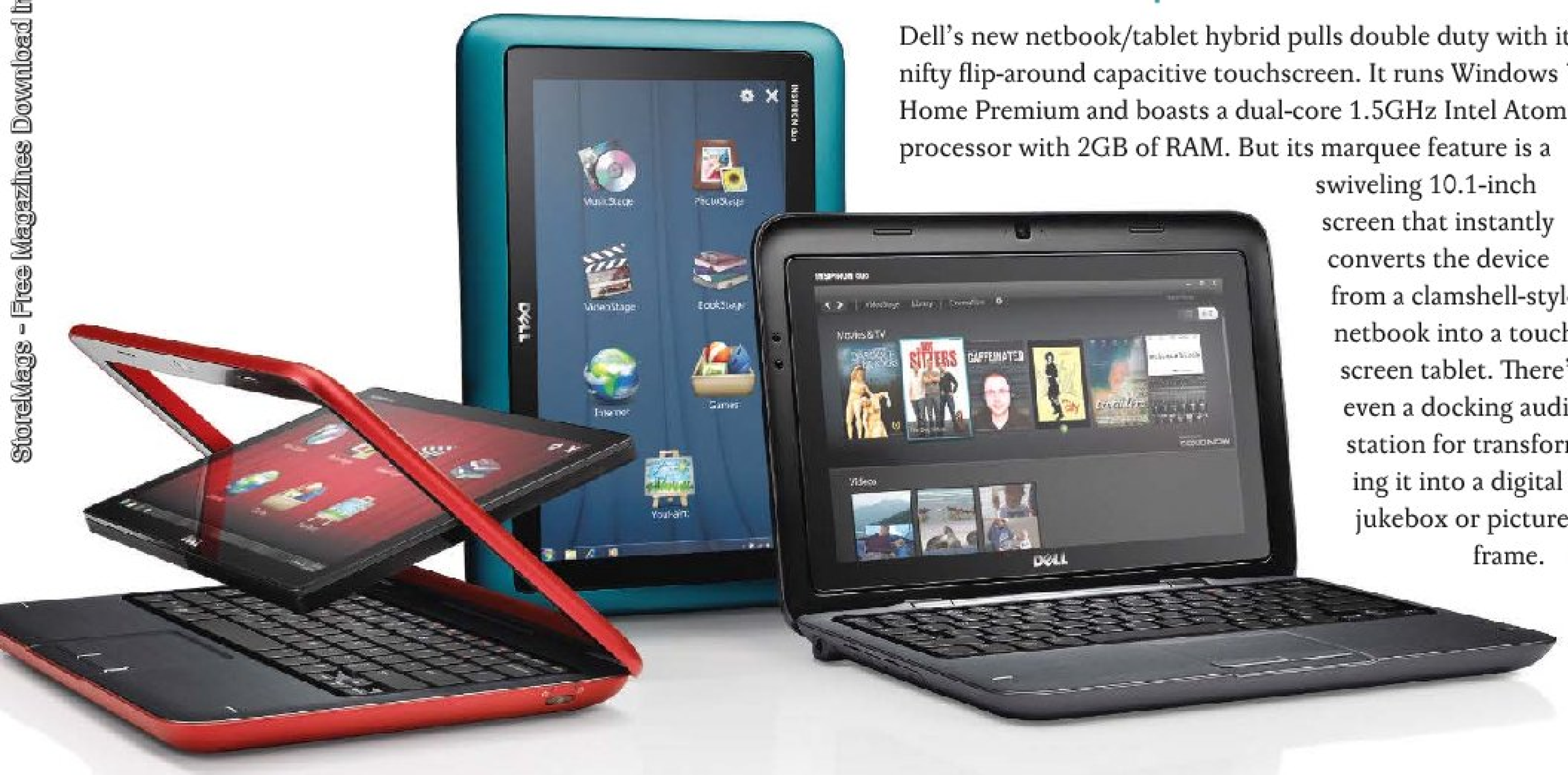


AMD Brazos

The latest ultraportable platform from AMD, code-named Brazos, features two new chips (code-named Ontario and Zacate). They integrate single- and dual-core CPUs that should outperform Intel's competing Atom, as well as an impressive DirectX 11–capable GPU, all on the same piece of silicon. Brazos should be a popular option for a flood of more-capable netbooks and inexpensive ultraportable laptops.

Dell Inspiron Duo

Dell's new netbook/tablet hybrid pulls double duty with its nifty flip-around capacitive touchscreen. It runs Windows 7 Home Premium and boasts a dual-core 1.5GHz Intel Atom processor with 2GB of RAM. But its marquee feature is a swiveling 10.1-inch screen that instantly converts the device from a clamshell-style netbook into a touch-screen tablet. There's even a docking audio station for transforming it into a digital jukebox or picture frame. »



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Nintendo 3DS

The Nintendo 3DS handheld won't be as fast as a PlayStation 3 or an Xbox 360, and it won't let you play older DS and DSi games in 3D. But it will do lots of cool stuff. The 3DS looks stunning, with a spectacular 800-by-240, 3D-capable widescreen and a second, 320-by-240 touchscreen, all housed in an 8.1-ounce package. It will let you take 3D pictures with dual cameras, play "augmented reality" games, and see new games and native software in 3D without special glasses. The handheld's widescreen will allow you to manually adjust the depth of its 3D effect—and even knock the action down to regular 2D if you don't need the extra dimension.

Acer Iconia

With its clamshell design and dual touchscreens, Acer's Iconia makes a clear design statement: Touch is in. When closed, the Iconia looks like an ordinary laptop. But when open, it resembles no other notebook or slate. At the heart of the Iconia's navigation is the Ring interface. You activate the Ring by putting five fingers on the bottom display, which Acer refers to as the "hand screen" or the "navigation screen." Up pops up a wheel that you can scroll through to access apps optimized for finger navigation.

RIM BlackBerry PlayBook

Due out later this year, the BlackBerry PlayBook tablet has a 7-inch screen to rival the Samsung Galaxy Tab's. It packs a dual-core CPU, 1GB of RAM, front- and rear-facing cameras, 1080p video recording, a micro-USB port, and a micro-HDMI output into a 0.38-inch-thick package. It will link directly to BlackBerry Enterprise Server and support multitasking for users seeking a productivity tool. But an app ecosystem, multiple ports, Flash 10.1 support, and hardware-accelerated video indicate a new, non-CrackBerry target audience. ●

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Here's How

11 Uses for an Old PC

BY LOYD CASE

Just because you bought a new PC doesn't mean you must throw away the old one. Here's how to make the most of an older computer.

YOU'VE FINALLY bought a new PC. It has a boatload of memory, lots of cores, and a fast, modern graphics card. But now your old computer sits in a corner—and you feel guilty about the whole idea of throwing it out. After all, it's perfectly functional.

Here are a few ways to put that old system to work.

1. Convert It Into a Server

If you have a home network with family members on it, reusing the PC as a NAS (network-attached storage) box or even as an actual server may be just the ticket.

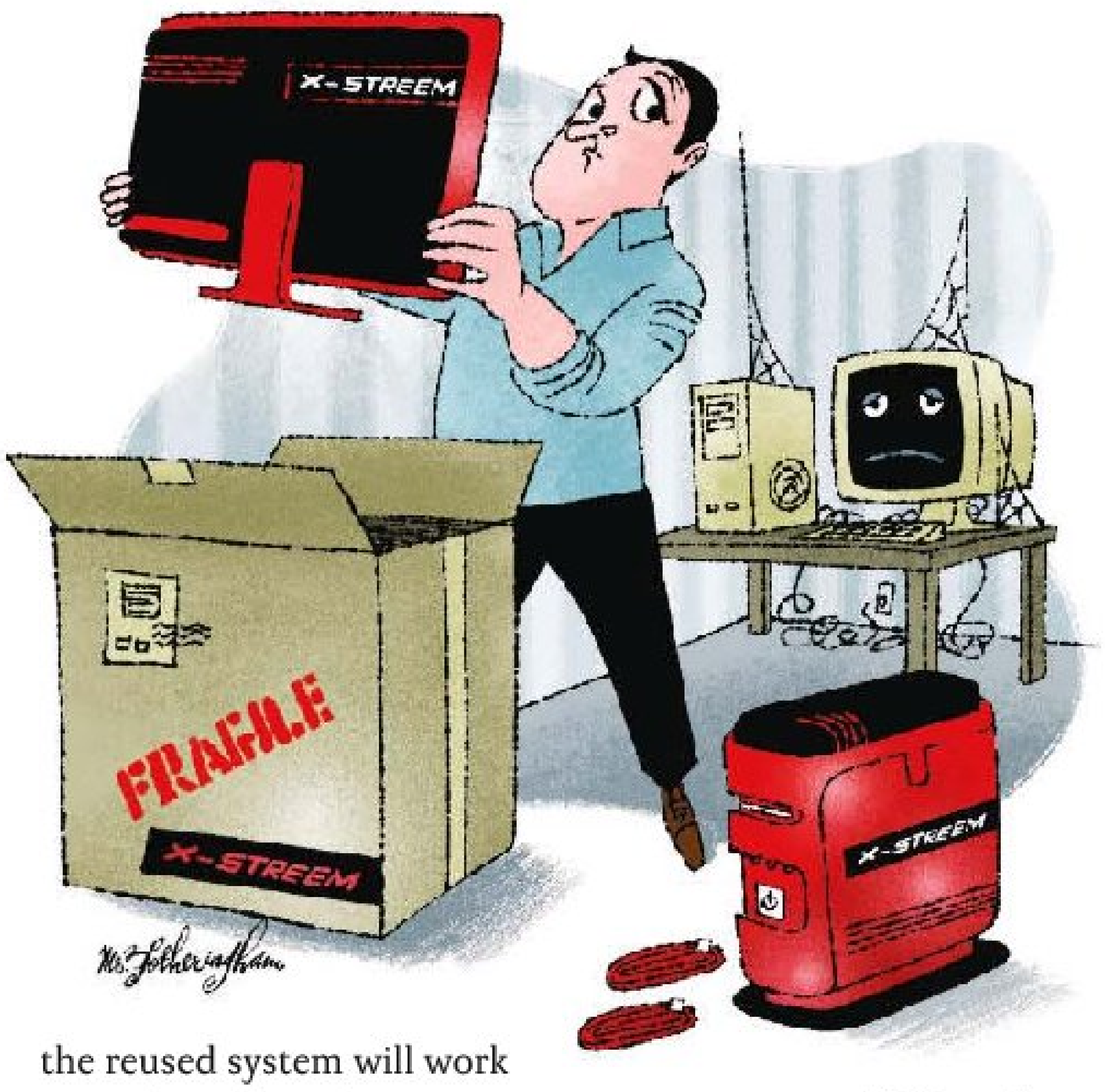
However, it's not simply a matter of plugging an old PC into a network connection. Most desktop systems aren't configured to be effective servers or storage systems. For one thing, they probably use too much power. You'll want to set BIOS power management to run cooling fans in quiet mode, if that option exists. You'll also need to set up the operating system so it doesn't shut down at inconvenient times, yet runs in a low-power state when not being actively used.

Bear in mind that you'll probably want to run your server "headless" (that is, without a monitor), and sans keyboard and mouse as well. While you'll require a display and input devices for initial setup, make sure that the reused system will work properly without them.

Also, the operating system is likely not well suited for storage applications, particularly for multiple users. Windows XP, Vista, or Windows 7 can function well as a storage repository for a couple of users, but you'll want to create user accounts for each person who might need access. You may also want to set storage quotas.

A better solution: Install a proper network operating system. One choice is Windows Home Server. However, it costs over $100, and it may prefer newer hardware.

An alternative is FreeNAS. Open-source software, FreeNAS (find.pcworld.com/71101) is designed to turn a PC into a network-attached storage device and is based on FreeBSD, a Unix variant. If you're not certain you want to commit to an unfamiliar OS, you can download FreeNAS as a LiveCD version; this is an ISO file that, when burned to a CD, will boot off an optical drive and run from memory. You can keep your old OS on the hard drive until you determine whether FreeNAS fits your needs.



2. Give It to a School

If your PC isn't too archaic, consider donating it to a local school or day care center. It could go to the high school computer lab; alternatively, the school district's computer services group might use it for parts.

If you go this route, consider buying some low-cost educational software packages and preinstalling them before donating. Also, as with selling a computer, you'll want to remove all software on the old PC that you've reinstalled on your new one. And make sure to include all license information for software you're preinstalling on the giveaway.

3. Turn It Into an Experimental Box

You've heard about this Linux thing, and maybe you'd like to give it a whirl. But the thought of trying to create a dual-boot system on

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your primary PC leaves you a little green around the gills. Now you can experiment to your heart's content on your old box.

Check out Ubuntu (ubuntu.com), the sexy Linux distro that geeks love to, well, love. The neat thing about Linux is all the built-in support for older hardware, so installation is usually easy—in fact, installing Ubuntu is sometimes simpler than installing Windows. And a wealth of free software for Linux is just waiting to be tried out.

A number of true Unix-based operating systems are available, ranging from FreeBSD or PC-BSD (based on the Berkeley Unix version) to OpenSolaris, based on the Sun Microsystems version of Unix.

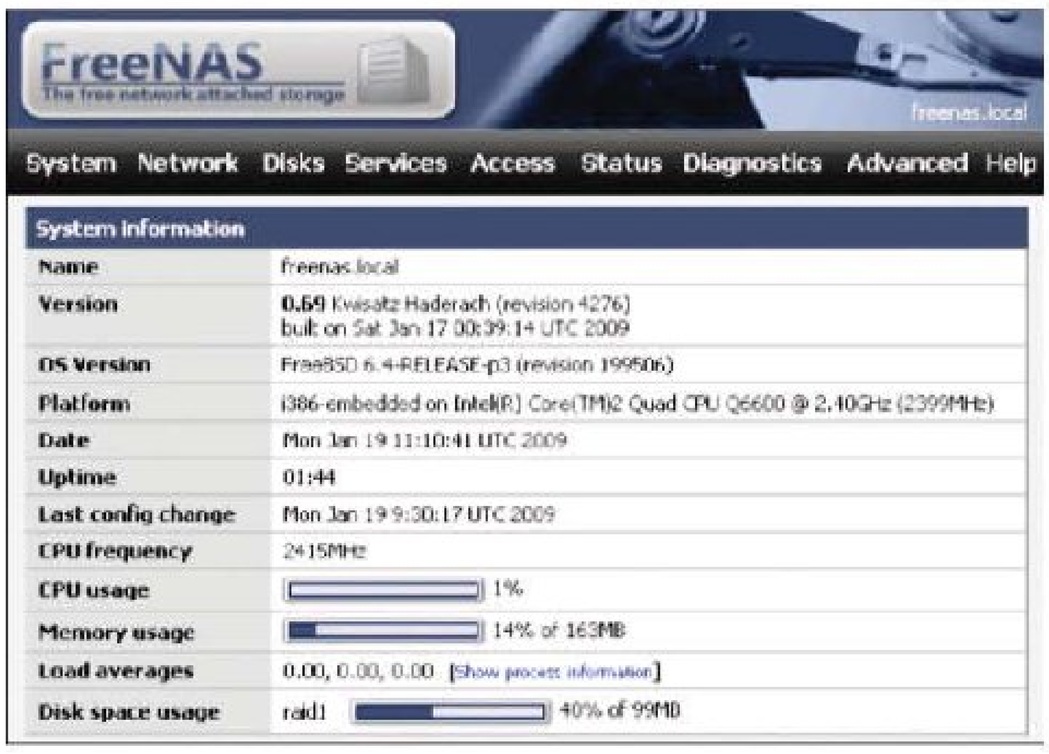
4. Give It to a Relative

I do this all the time. My brother-in-law has modest computing needs, so I often just hand over one of my two-year-old PCs, though I'll usually throw in a midrange or entry-level graphics card.

I don't generally recommend doing this with your kids, though—they often need as much or more PC horsepower than you use on a regular basis (outside of gaming and photography).

Also, giving a system to family members means you are now the go-to person for tech support. (For help with that role, see "How to Fix Your Family's PC Problems," find.pcworld.com/70375.)

You'll want to completely erase the hard drive and reinstall the OS from scratch. If it's an off-the-shelf system from a major manufacturer, restoring it to its original condition from the restore partition or the restore disc accomplishes the same thing.



YOU CAN TURN your old PC into a network-attached storage device with FreeNAS, an open-source, no-cost server operating system.

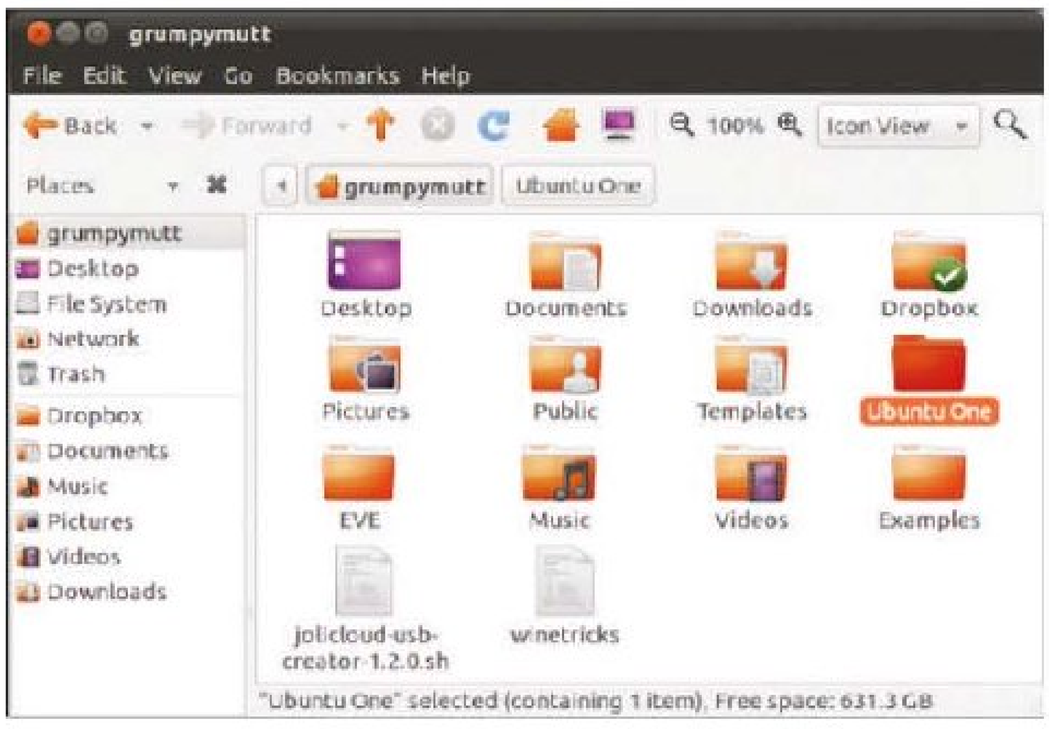
5. Dedicate It to Distributed Computing

Want to do a little good for humanity? How about dedicating your old PC to one of various public distributed-computing projects?

The best known is probably Folding@Home, which employs computing resources from all over the world to help study protein folding, an essential element of understanding how many diseases operate. Other distributed-computing ventures include SETI@Home (the search for extraterrestrial intelligence) and various charities and research projects (get links from the online version of this article at find.pcworld.com/71059).

6. Put It to Work as a Game Server

Do you have a favorite multiplayer game? If so, see if it's a game where you can host a server on a local PC, turning your old system into a dedicated game server. Older machines used as dedicated game servers often need surprisingly little system horsepower.



TRY OUT UBUNTU, the most popular version of Linux, on an older computer. Linux offers built-in support for older hardware.

7. Use It for Old-School Gaming

Related to the game-server idea, consider repurposing the box for old-school gaming. For example, you could install Windows 98 on it so that you can run older Windows 95 and DOS games, if you have a bunch around—although this isn't as necessary as it used to be. Online services such as Steam and Impulse offer older games that have been rewritten to work under newer operating systems, and DOSBox lets you emulate a legacy DOS environment so that you can get your classic-gaming fix.

Perhaps the most complete site for older PC games is Good Old Games (www.gog.com). GOG offers many older titles, all of which work fine under newer operating systems. So if you've always wanted to go back and play Planescape: Torment, now's your chance.

Love arcade games? Don't worry about running out of quarters: To go really old school, install MAME (multiple arcade machine emulator) software. (One example is at find.pcworld.com/71102.) It will allow you to play arcade games and titles written for older game consoles, provided that you have access to the ROMs and other related files you need to run the games. MAME software can become a gigantic time sink (albeit a very fun one), so consider yourself warned!

8. Make It a Secondary Computing Server

If you're a content creator using a title like 3dsmax, Adobe After Effects, or »

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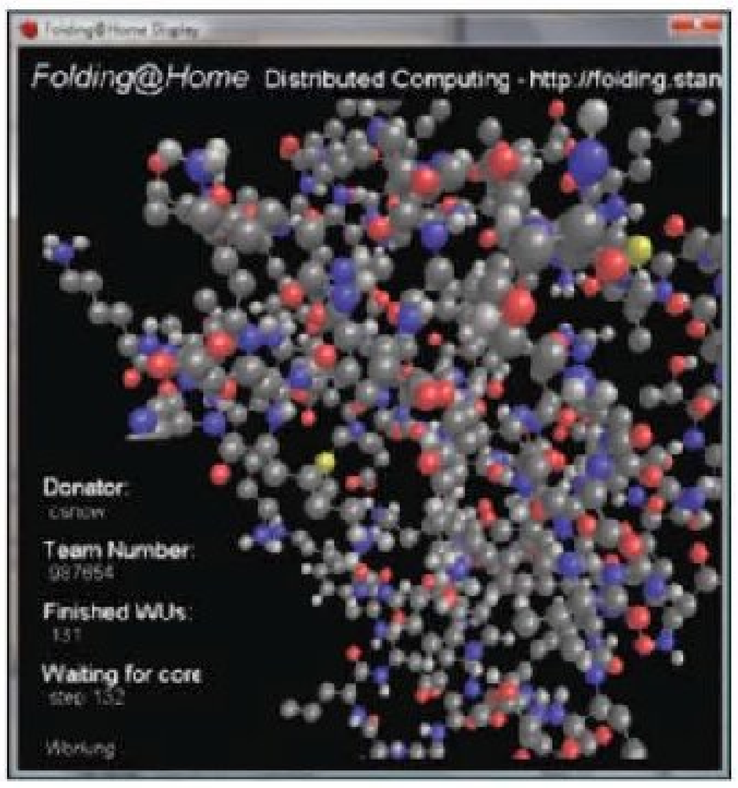
Here's How

Sony Vegas (see page 52), having another PC to help with distributed rendering chores can greatly speed up final renders for complex projects.

Each application handles distributed rendering a little differently, so you'll need to consult your documentation. But typically you'll install a lightweight application on the secondary rendering system, which will take data and commands from the primary system and then return results when done. The main app on your production system, or a separate manager app, manages the rendering across multiple networked systems.



HELP MEDICAL RESEARCHERS by using your old PC to fold proteins with Folding@Home.

9. Set It Up as a Light-Duty Living-Room PC

My family has a small PC in the living room that we often use for quick Web surfing and e-mail checking, and the kids occasionally use it for homework. This setup can work particularly well if you have networked storage in the house, so people can access their files whether they're on a personal system or on the communal one.

You'll want security software that's as bulletproof as possible. With multiple users on one system, someone, sometime, will hit a Website that may try to upload a Trojan horse or other malware. (See our security suites feature on page 73.)

10. Salvage It

If you have a do-it-yourself bent and you build your own PCs, you might reduce the cost of your new system by salvaging parts from the old one. Good candidates for salvage include the PC case (if it's not a proprietary, prebuilt system), the optical drive, the power supply, and sometimes the memory modules.

Depending on how much you reuse, the distinction between a new system and one that has simply been upgraded gets hazy: If you replace the motherboard, CPU, memory, and primary hard drive, but keep the case, power supply, graphics card, and optical drive, is it a new system or an upgraded one?

That will still leave you with a few old parts—which brings us to our final alternative for old-PC reuse.

11. Sell It

Somewhere on eBay, someone is looking for a computer. They may not be able to afford a new PC, or are looking for a second one for the family. Your old computer, at the right price, may be just what they need. If all goes smoothly, everyone wins: You unload your old hardware, which finds a good home with a new user who can appreciate it.

However, it's not as simple as selling it at a garage sale. For one thing, scammers cruise both Craigslist and eBay, looking to convince unwary sellers to take deposits that mysteriously vanish when the sellers try to cash them. Always be suspicious of anyone who wants to use Western Union and has an overseas address.

My rule of thumb is to stick to selling locally if it's Craigslist, and only in the United States if it's eBay (since I live in the U.S.). Also, using an escrow site like PayPal (required for eBay anyway) can add a degree of safety. Read "How to Sell Your PC and Other Gadgets" (find.pcworld.com/70212) for more tips on selling your old tech gear.

As you can see, an old computer may have many uses, particularly if it's still in good working condition. And not all uses for a PC require quad-core systems with high-end graphics. So if that old system is sitting in a closet somewhere, dig it out and put it to use.

Who knows? It might be *your* old machine that identifies the signal that's the first sign of intelligent life outside our planet.

TEAM FORTRESS 2 is a multiplayer online game that supports dedicated game servers—one role suited for an older computer.

RELIVE THE GLORY days of arcade games with MAME (multiple arcade machine emulator) software. You won't need quarters.

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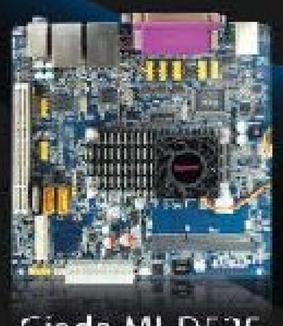

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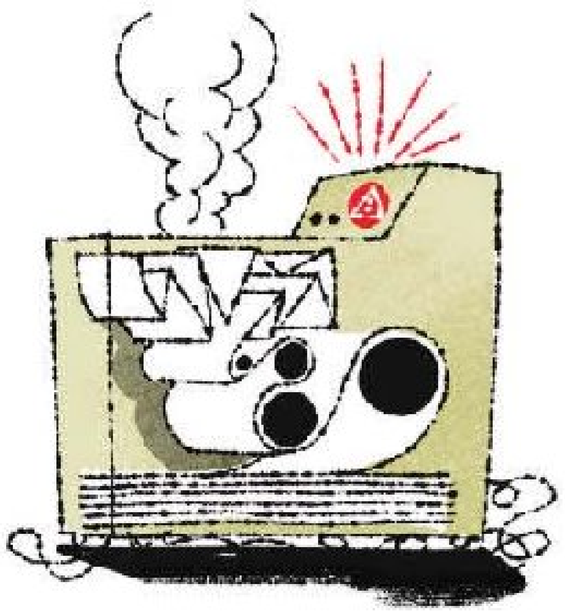
Five Printer Nightmares and How to Fix Them

EVERYBODY LOVES to hate printers. When you need one most, it'll display a stupefying error message or create a mess of paper and spilled ink.

But with patience and attention, you can probably overcome a printer problem, and avoid having the nightmare recur. Here's how to address five of the most common printer complaints.

A little care and attention can minimize or halt many printer headaches. Here are some basic steps for five of the most common problems.



1. Paper Jams

Jams occur when the paper feeding through the printer goes awry. The printer may extrude a crumpled mess; or it may stop in midjob, and the mess, or part of it, remains trapped inside.

When a jam occurs, some printers flash lights, screaming for help. Others sense where the jam is and provide guidance. If yours does, follow its advice. Also, check its documentation. Here are the basic steps to follow.

Turn off the printer: If you're going to poke inside, you don't want trouble with electricity or moving parts. And if you're dealing with a laser printer, you don't want the fuser to generate additional heat. If the paper is jammed in or near the fuser unit, wait for the fuser to cool off.

Open all doors leading to the paper path: If you can't tell which door leads to the jam, remove or open the input tray and follow the paper path to the output tray, opening every door or panel that you can find.

Carefully pull out paper sheets and scraps: Check for pages that are stuck or askew, plus scraps. Pull paper out of the path firmly, but carefully and slowly. When possible, pull in the direction the paper is supposed to go—not backward. Remove all the paper; any scraps could cause further jamming. If you break a mechanical piece in the printer, stop and call for service.

Close all doors and turn on the printer: Once switched on, the printer should reset itself. If the printer says it's still jammed, double-check for scraps. If it continues to complain, try turning it off and then back on. If that doesn't fix it, call for service.

How to avoid this next time: Use only one kind of paper at a time in your input tray. Whether your printer has one input tray or several, tell it what kind of paper the tray holds: Most printer controls include a section or drop-down list where you can pick a paper by name, type, thickness, or other quality. If you aren't sure whether your printer takes a certain kind of paper, check its documentation. When you reload the input tray, pay attention to how the paper should be loaded, and check whether the length or width guides need adjusting.

2. Stuck in the Queue

Regardless of how sophisticated it is, a printer prints only one job at a time. A job may get held up and block all others behind it. If the printer hasn't stalled for a mechanical reason, check the print queue to see if a specific job in front of yours might be the culprit.

If your printer is not networked: If your computer has a dedicated printer, you can get to the print queue directly. On Windows, access is through the Control Panel's Printers program item; on a Mac, it's through Utilities' Print & Fax program item. Any stuck jobs will be listed there, and you can easily cancel them.

If your printer is on a network: On a networked queue, you have control only over the jobs that you send from your own PC. If another person's job is the problem, you must either contact them for help or ask your IS department to intervene.

How to avoid this next time: If the print queue clogs up regularly, your IT staff needs to figure out why it's happening. Common problems include trying to print a job whose file size is so large that it chokes the network or your printer's memory; attempting to print to a special kind of paper (such as letterhead) without loading the paper or specifying the right tray; and requesting a print job that requires you (or some other user) to feed the paper manually, but failing to perform this step.

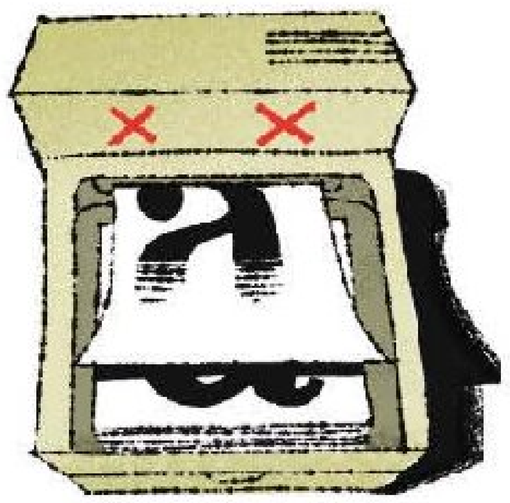
3. Power Loss in the Middle of a Print Job

Treat this situation as if it were a kind of paper jam.

Turn off the printer: You don't want its parts to start churning unexpectedly during your work on recovery.

Clear the paper path: Remove sheets stuck in midprint.

Turn on the printer (if power has been restored): As the printer initializes, check for error messages or odd noises that might indicate a malfunction or damage. If you have a laser or LED printer, check the documentation for a maintenance routine to



clean untransferred toner from the drum. An inkjet cartridge that stopped in midsquirt may need cleaning. Run a test page and check it for »

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Here's How

stains and streaks. Consult your printer's documentation for further guidance.

How to avoid this next time: The odds that a printer will turn off on its own are low. If outages are relatively frequent in your area, plug the printer into a UPS device so that it can finish printing and power down normally the next time the electricity fails.

4. Using the Wrong Side of Photo Paper

You wait eagerly for your photo to come out, but what you get is big splotches of ink sitting—and not drying—on the wrong side of the photo paper.

Cancel the print job if you can: This is especially important with multiple sheets of photos; each wrong-way sheet will just add to the mess.

Remove the paper carefully and make sure the ink doesn't run: Avoid getting it on your hands—wear gloves or use a napkin or paper towel.

Throw the paper away: Yes, you'll have to say good-bye.

How to avoid this next time: Check the documentation and tray markings to make certain you're inserting the photo paper correctly.

5. Spilled Toner or Ink

Toner can spill inside the printer during regular use, or it can spill onto surfaces, clothing, skin, or carpets when you're replacing a cartridge. Here's what to do.

Take basic precautions:

- Keep spilled toner dry and contained.
- Do not use hot water, cold water, or heat to wipe it up; use any general cleaning solution with care and caution.
- Do not use a conventional household vacuum cleaner, as it might blow the toner out the back.
- Avoid inhaling the toner.

Try one of these three basic ways to remove spilled toner:

- For spills on hard, smooth surfaces, use cardboard or a paper towel to sweep the toner carefully into a plastic bag or other sealable receptacle for disposal.
- Special toner-cleaning cloths use static to attract the toner for easy wiping. Regular paper towels or cotton towels will also work.
- A special toner vacuum is the only kind of vacuum you should consider using. It has attachments designed to reach into small spaces and pull toner from the interior of a printer or an unlucky area of carpet, along with a receptacle designed to trap very small particles.

How to avoid this next time: Always handle toner cartridges carefully, especially during insertion and removal. Before working with toner cartridges, protect surrounding areas from spills by covering them with newsprint or paper towels.

Don't cry over spilled ink: It's unusual for ink to spill from a cartridge unless the cartridge has been punctured, squeezed, cracked, or crushed. Also, a refilled cartridge may be more susceptible to leaking or spilling, so handle it carefully.

Online advice on cleaning up printer ink spills recommends using substances from rubbing alcohol to WD-40 to hair spray to bleach—but effectiveness depends on where the ink landed, and on its chemical content.

A commonsense approach would be to handle spills quickly yet cautiously, starting with basic cleaning procedures and escalating as necessity dictates. Before applying any cleaning substance over a large area, test it to ensure that it doesn't cause damage of its own.

First step in all cases: Blot spilled ink with an absorbent cloth or paper towel.

Ink on skin: Use soap and water to clean further. If ink remains, try scrubbing. Use any additional cleaning solutions cautiously.

Ink on fabric or carpet: With soap and water, brush the stain using an upward-inward motion—upward so as not to push the ink deeper into the fabric, and inward so as not to spread the stain. Use additional cleaning solutions with caution.

Ink on hard surfaces: If a stain remains after blotting, try another method or cleaner suited to the surface.

Ink in the printer: Clean-up here will be a messy job, and the outcome will be uncertain.

- Turn off the printer if you can. If it offers cartridge access only when it is on, keep it on for now, and check the cartridges. You may have to decide whether the spill will be worse if you remove the cartridge or leave it where it is. Try to minimize further spillage as you clean.
- Turn off the printer now if you haven't yet done so, access its interior, and find and remove as much spillage as you can through blotting. Then use rubbing alcohol and lint-free cloths to clean further; take care not to let anything get stuck inside.
- Run a test page and check for evidence of leftover ink, such as splotches or continuous streaks. Make sure the printer acts normally.
- If you're lucky, everything will be fine after you run pages through the printer to let spilled ink print itself out. If you're unlucky, ink you couldn't remove will lead to further damage.

How to avoid this next time: Handle ink cartridges carefully, especially if they're refills, and during insertion and removal. If you're spill-prone, protect the area with newspaper or paper towels.

—Melissa Riofrio

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Fix an XP System That Won't Recognize Flash Drives

READER THOMAS IS having a problem with his six-year-old Windows XP Professional system: When he plugs in a flash drive, Windows doesn't recognize it.

Before I reveal the solution to this vexing problem, Thomas, note: You didn't give me nearly enough information in your initial e-mail message. In fact, it took two follow-up messages for me to get all the details I needed to find a fix.

So please, everyone, revisit my post on how to ask for tech help (see find.pcworld.com/71061), and remember that you'll greatly increase your chances of a response by following its simple guidelines.

As it happens, Microsoft itself has a fix for the problem of unrecognized USB flash drives (and other such devices), which, it says, is most likely the result of "corrupted or incorrect keys in the registry."

CLICK THIS BUTTON for Microsoft's flash-drive fix.

Just go to find.pcworld.com/71062, scroll down a bit until you see the Microsoft Fix It button, click it, and follow the instructions. That should do the trick!

—Rick Broida

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I acquired a used PC but don't have an administrator password. Help!

—Alexleonardme

YOU CAN ACCESS a password-protected administrator account in a number of ways. One is quick and easy, but works only in XP. If the used PC runs Vista or Windows 7, skip the next two paragraphs.

The following will work only if the previous owner didn't know enough to close XP's backdoor entrance to administrator control.

First, boot into Safe Mode: Start your PC, and press **<F5>** before the Windows logo appears. In the resulting Boot menu, select *Safe Mode*. The log-on screen will probably show a user you've never seen before, Administrator, that does not have a password. This lets you enter Windows as an administrator-level user, and you can use Control Panel's User Accounts applet to change the password.

If you're using Vista or Windows 7, you can remove the administrator password with Ubuntu Linux. Careful! This gets complicated.

Download the current Ubuntu version from find.pcworld.com/71065. Double-click the just-downloaded .iso file. Windows may start a program that burns your Ubuntu CD. If it doesn't, download and install ISO Recorder (find.pcworld.com/60657), and then try again.

Boot off the CD. When asked, click the *Try Ubuntu* button.

Install the software: From the menus in the top-right corner of the screen, select *System•Administration•Software Sources*.

Check the two options not yet checked: *Community-maintained Open Source software (universe)* and *Software restricted by copyright or legal issues (multiverse)*. Click *Close*, then *Reload*. After the program is done processing, select *System•Administration•Synaptic Package Manager* from the menus in the top-right corner.

In the resulting window's Search field, enter **chntpw**. A program with that name should appear in the subsequent list of packages. Click it and select *Mark for installation*. Click the *Apply* toolbar icon. Click *Apply*, and wait until the installation is complete.

Now mount your drive: From the top menus, select *Places*, then your internal hard drive or Windows partition. When it's mounted, a File Browser window (much like Windows Explorer) will appear.

Double-click the folder icons to go to the Windows drive's Windows\System32\config folder. Leave this window up. From the top menus, select *Applications•Accessories•Terminal*.

Arrange the two windows so that you can see the top section of the File Browser window behind the Terminal window.

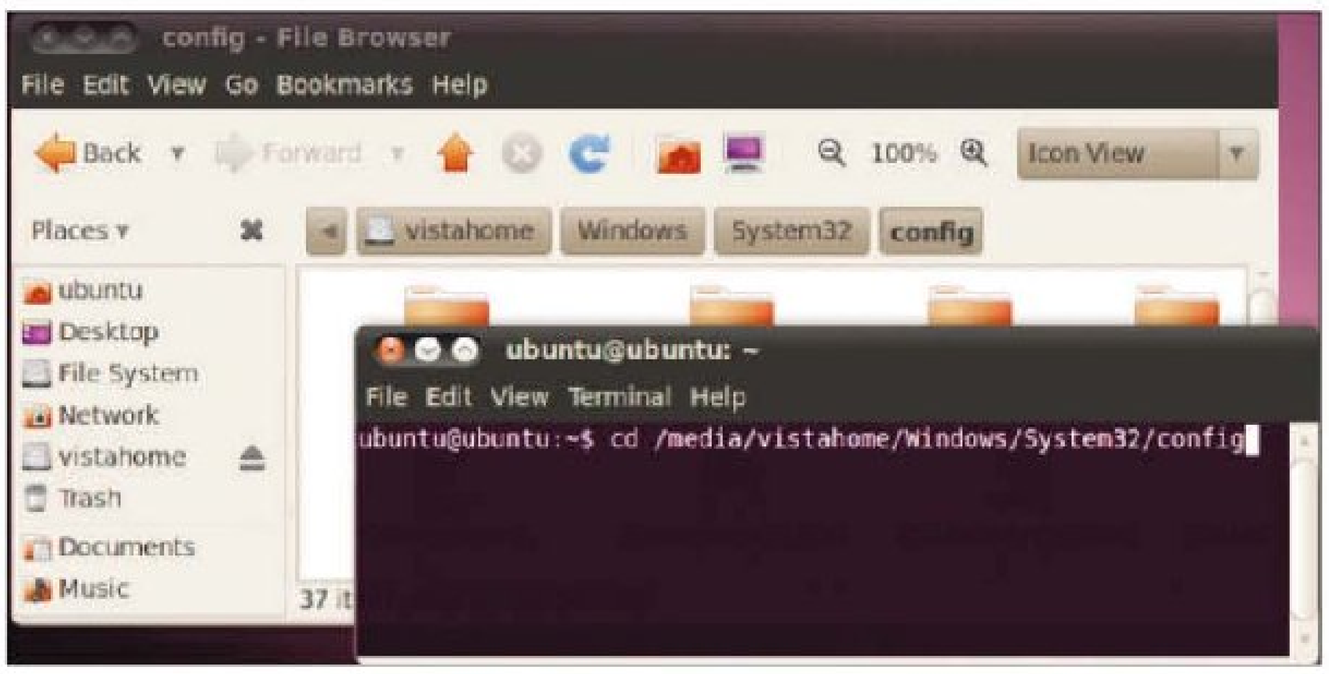
In the Terminal command-line window, type **cd /media/** (note the space after *cd*) and the path to your config folder, using the folder names at the top as a guide. (Note: Ubuntu's Terminal is case-sensitive.) Then press **<Enter>**.

Now type **sudo chntpw -u logon SAM**, where *logon* is the log-on name for the administrator account. Press **<Enter>**; the last section of scrolled-up text will begin '. . . . User Edit Menu:'

Press **1** (the number, not lowercase *L*), then **<Enter>**. At the resulting question, press **Y**.

When the program's done, click the power-button logo in the upper-right corner and reboot into Windows. The account no longer needs a password.

—Lincoln Spector



YOU CAN USE Ubuntu Linux to gain access to a password-protected administrator account in Vista or Windows 7—but follow the directions given here carefully.

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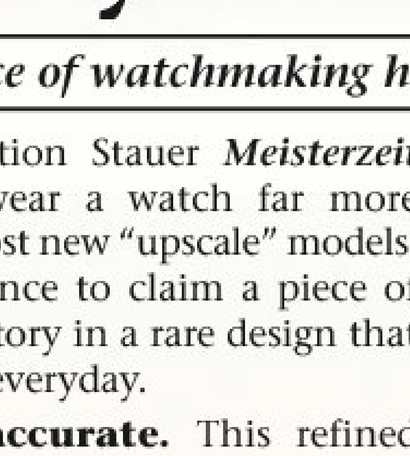

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RICK BROIDA'S HASSLE-FREE PC

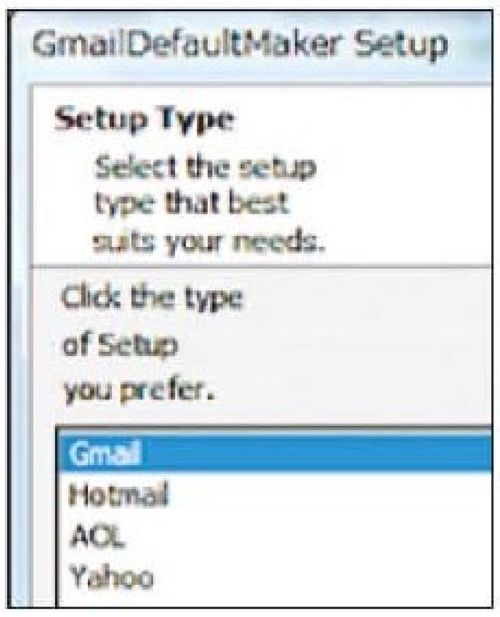
Three Ways to Make Your Online Life a Little Simpler

YOU PROBABLY KNOW that utilities can do a lot of work for you. Here are three that should prove genuinely useful and convenient.

> This month's quick tips show how to reset your default e-mail client, weed out duplicate files, and transfer your iPhone's photos wirelessly.

Set Your Default E-Mail Client to AOL, Gmail, Hotmail, or Yahoo Mail

If you use a Web-based e-mail client such as Gmail or Yahoo Mail, you've likely encountered this hassle before: You click a 'mailto' link on a Web page, and then watch while Windows tries to open Outlook, Windows Live Mail, or some other desktop program you don't use and haven't configured. Error messages (and possibly cursing) ensue.



THIS SIMPLE UTILITY lets you choose a default mail service.

You could jump through various hoops to configure Windows, your browser, or both to direct such e-mail links to the proper destination (to Gmail, say), but why bother? I've found a small, simple utility—GmailDefaultMaker (find.pcworld.com/71071)—that will do the hoop-jumping on your behalf.

Just run the free program and choose the default e-mail service you want: AOL, Gmail, Hotmail, or Yahoo. (Yes, the program needs a name change.) Then go about your business. It's that easy.

Now, whenever you click a 'mailto' link, you'll land in the proper Web client, not in an unwanted desktop program.

Eliminate Duplicate Files With a Free Utility

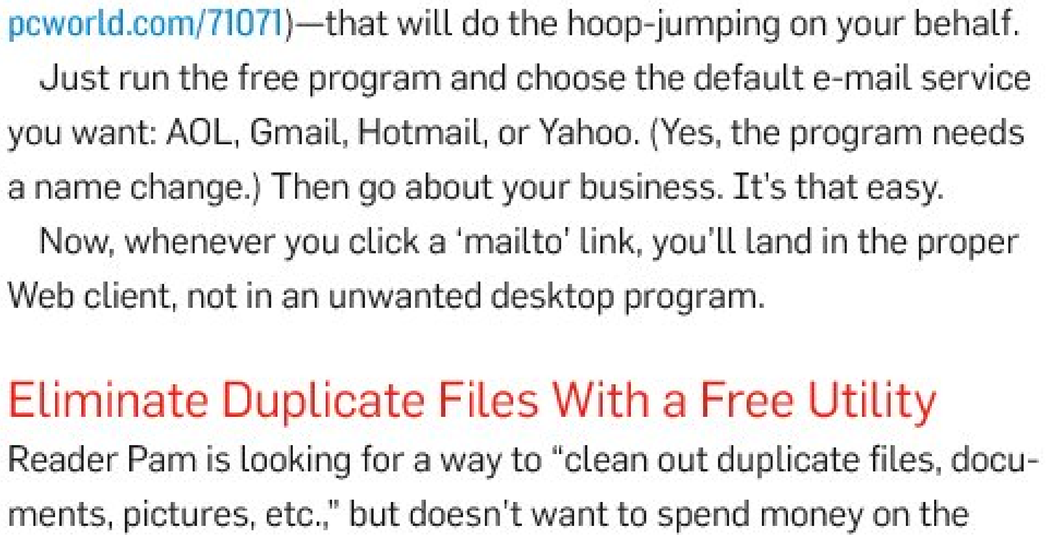
Reader Pam is looking for a way to "clean out duplicate files, documents, pictures, etc.," but doesn't want to spend money on the project. In other words, she wants a freeware assistant.

I have just the thing: Fast Duplicate File Finder (find.pcworld.com/71073). True to its name, the utility scans selected folders on your hard drive, finds duplicate files, and gives you the option of tossing the copies into the trash. Also true to its name: It's fast.

My colleague Preston Gralla wrote up FDFF last year (find.pcworld.com/71074), so I won't repeat his fairly glowing review.

I will say that I tried it myself on my large and unruly MP3 collection, and it discovered some duplicates I didn't even know were there. Plus, I liked the assorted after-scan options the program affords, such as automatically selecting the older versions of duplicate files and moving or deleting checked files.

In other words, FDFF is a smart, useful utility that works as advertised—and you can't beat the price. Sound good, Pam?



FDFF DOES THE work of scanning folders to find duplicate files.

Wirelessly Transfer Snapshots From Your iPhone to Your Computer

Like most iPhone owners, I snap a lot of photos with the handset. Unfortunately, the only way to copy those images to my PC is with a sync cable and all the usual Windows Explorer drudgery.

That's why WiFiPhoto (find.pcworld.com/71075) is one of my all-time favorite apps. It creates a link between my iPhone and my computer, but it does so without wires. Instead, as you might expect, it uses a Wi-Fi network.

After loading the app (it works with all iOS devices, not just the iPhone), tap the photo(s) you want to copy, and then tap *Done*. You'll see a message that says 'Connect your browser to *IP address*' (see the screen at right).

WIFIPHOTO LINKS YOUR iPhone to your PC to transfer photos wirelessly.

Now fire up your Web browser, type in that IP address, and then press **<Enter>**. Presto! You'll see a thumbnail for each photo that you selected.

To save them all in one fell swoop, click *Download Zip*. Otherwise, you can click an individual thumbnail to open it in your system's default image viewer; the viewing utility I like for this purpose is IrfanView (find.pcworld.com/47858).

I use WiFiPhoto almost daily, and I find it absolutely indispensable. If you're tired of doing the sync-cable shuffle every time you want to offload some images, you'll find it a necessity, too. And WiFiPhoto costs all of 99 cents. ●

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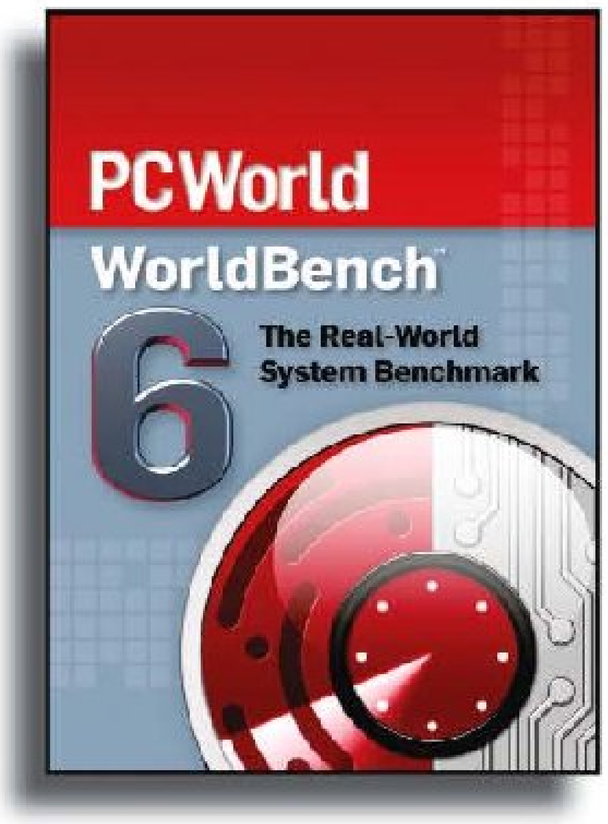

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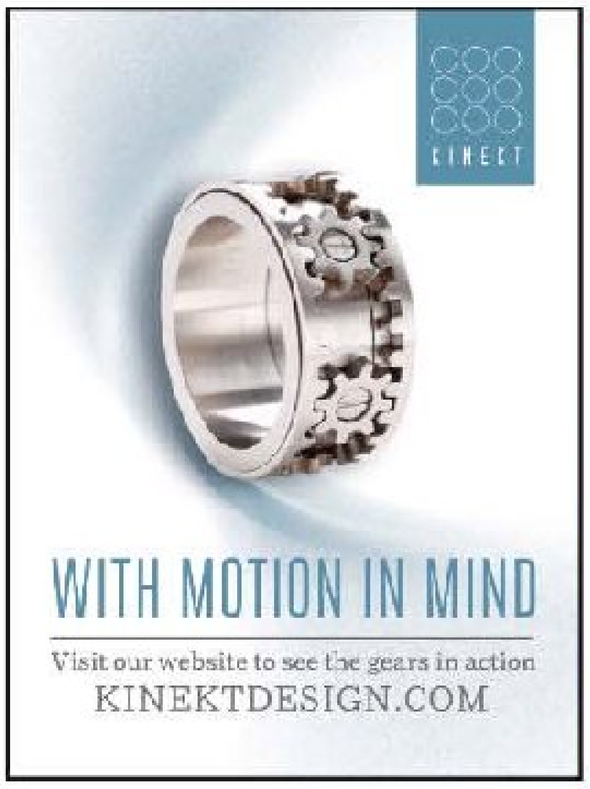

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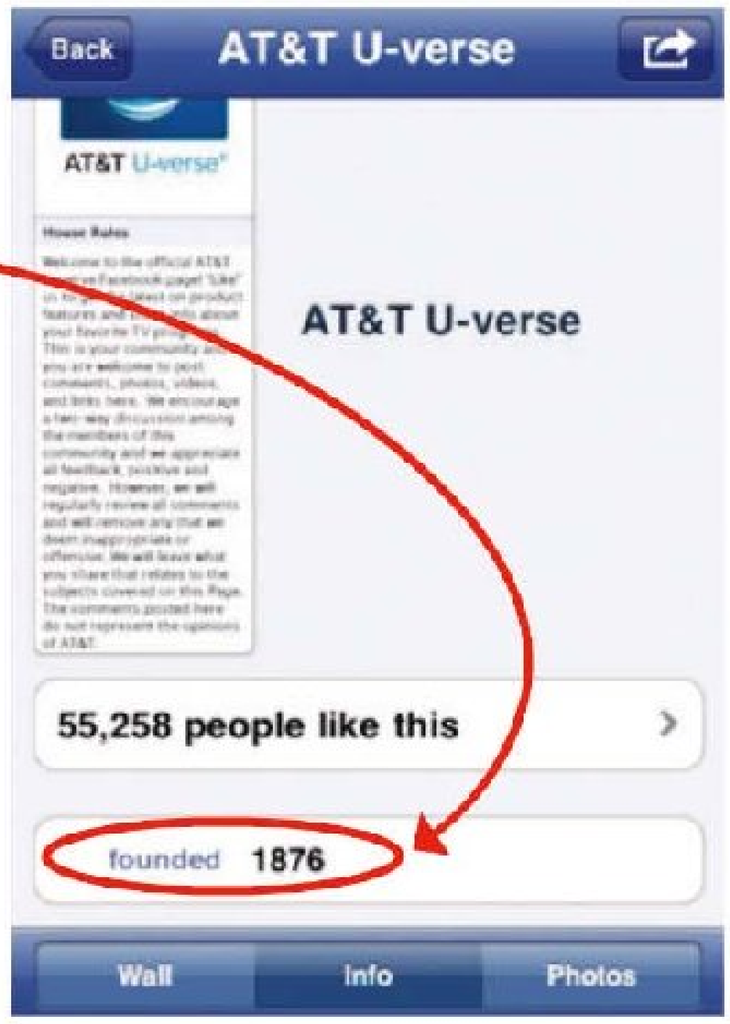
Thinking Ahead

Back in 1876, Alexander Graham Bell was granted a patent for the telephone. Coincidentally, that's the same year that AT&T U-verse launched its Facebook page. Talk about visionaries! (Culled from Facebook by Paolo Terrasi.)



Nonfatal Error

Jesse Friedman received this error message while using Vanilla Forums, an open-source discussion forum platform. One way to succeed: Redefine success.

Maybe That's Too Much Sharing

Derrick Rowell was sharing his screen with someone, using LogMeIn's Join.me site, when a link to his own screen suddenly popped up into the browser's address bar. Next, the browser image began reproducing in an inadvertently artistic manner. "Makes me think of *2001: A Space Odyssey*," says Rowell.

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Want to see more Plugged In? Follow us on Twitter (@PCWPluggedIn).

Your McHealth Research study concludes that 500 million people will use mobile health apps by 2015. But we bet that 6 billion will use GPS apps to find the nearest McDonald's.

Urban Gaming Zynga recently launched the game CityVille on Facebook. It's kind of like FarmVille, but with cockroaches instead of cows.

Privacy Protection The Federal Trade Commission has proposed an online do-not-track list. That distant sound you hear is thousands of Internet business plans collapsing.

Google This The European Union is investigating Google for alleged anticompetitive practices. We hear that the inquiry is being hampered by unreliable search engine results.

The Long and Winding Road After years of false starts, Apple secures the rights to sell Beatles songs on iTunes. Turns out all they needed was love. And a lot of lawyers. ●

—Steve Fox, Steven Gray, JR Raphael

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