

# MONITOR

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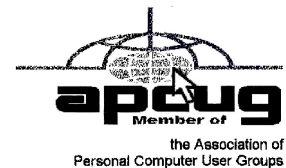
October 2014

Next Meeting  
Tuesday, October 14

## Browser Tips and Tricks Mark Zinzow

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## Which Hybrid Laptop Tablet is Best?

by Bob Rankin  
[askbobrankin.com](http://askbobrankin.com)

The computing industry has finally figured out what Windows 8.1 is good for: selling hybrid laptop-tablet machines. Win 8's touchscreen interface was made for tablets, not traditional clamshell laptops. Yet Win 8's strongest market is business, where a keyboard is essential. So manufacturers have settled on a hybrid form factor that just might work. Here are five examples of this breed: It's a Tablet, It's a Laptop, It's Both!

Industry analysts say that tablet sales are slowing. Maybe that's because lots of people are realizing that they're great for checking Facebook in the coffee shop, but it's harder to get real

work done. On the other hand, laptops can be power hungry, and heavier to tote around. That's why many mobile users are opting for hybrids, which have the ability to be a tablet or a laptop.

Will these versatile hybrid laptops (some-times called convertible laptops or 2-in-1 PCs) "transform your mobile lifestyle" as one vendor hopes? Let's take a look at five of them, and you can decide if this type of mobile computer is right for you.

The ASUS Transformer Book T100 plugs into a keyboard dock, changing from a 1.2 pound tablet into a laptop whose battery will last up to 12.5 hours thanks to Intel's new Bay Trail processor. The rather dinky 10.1 inch screen has a resolution of 1366 x 768 pixels, but a wide viewing angle and bright, crisp display make it suitable for viewing movies or word processing. It comes with 2GB of RAM, a 64GB SSD drive, USB 3.0 ports, Windows 8.1, and Office Home and Student 2013 suites. All that for just \$349 MSRP!



If you're looking for more power and a bigger screen, see the ASUS T300 line which offers Intel Core i5 or i7 CPUs, up to 8GB RAM, and up to 256 GB SSD drives.

The Dell Inspiron 11 3000 (updated 2014) has a rotating hinge that allows multiple modes: tablet, laptop, tent, and stand. ("Stand" mode places the keyboard under the display, making the hybrid easier to use in cramped quarters like airline seats.) With a base price of \$399 it's certainly affordable. Its 11.6 inch screen is adequate, as are the 4 GB of RAM and 500 GB hard drive of the Intel N-series CPU machine. At 3.1 pounds this machine is on the heavy side for hybrids, but not by much. Battery life is middle-of-the-road, at about 6 hours.

Lenovo's IdeaPad Yoga 2 11 is thinner and lighter than the Dell Inspiron, and it has the solid build quality of Lenovo ThinkPads. Starting at \$499, the Yoga 2 11 features the extremely flexible, bendable hinge of the Yoga series, enabling the same four modes as the Inspiron 11 3000 model. The 11.6 inch, 1366x768 display plays 1080p HD video nicely, although reviewers note that the Intel Celeron processor makes computing a bit sluggish. At least you can't lose the keyboard. Lenovo advertises battery life of up to 9 hours. NPD Group says the Yoga 2 line is "America's best selling convertible 2-in-1 PC."

HP offers the Pavilion x360, starting at \$399. It, too, sports a 11.6-inch, 1366 x 768 display to be used in laptop, tablet, tent and stand modes. Its Beats Audio sound system is the most robust of those mentioned here. It comes in black and "speckled cherry red." At just a hair over 3 lbs. it's not hard to carry around, but don't carry it too far from a wall outlet; most testers report that battery life is less robust than competing models. (Disclaimer: This review was sponsored by the number 3, and the word "robust.")

Microsoft's Surface Pro 3 is pretty awesome, if you can spare \$799 to start. That's for the 64GB / Intel i3 model that does not include a keyboard! Its 12 inch screen with 2160 x 1440 pixels provides uncompromising quality. The magnesium-alloy chassis is solid, and the optional keyboard (\$129) doubles as a tablet cover, clinging to the chassis with magnets. The Surface Pro weighs only 1.76 pounds without its cover, or 2.4 pounds with it. I think the Surface Pro 3 is the best hybrid design, but with a base model price tag approaching \$1,000, it's also the most expensive by far. (The high-end 512GB / Intel i7 model is just over \$2,000.) At least you get a free 1-year subscription to the *New York Times* crossword app.

It looks like Windows 8 is here to stay, and hybrid laptop-tablet devices are probably the form factor best suited for this operating system. I also expect that prices will come down, now that the platform is stabilizing and standardizing. Have you tried a hybrid laptop or 2-in-1 PC?

## Local Fire Departments and Citizens May Save Lives with These Apps

by Ira Wilsker

**O**n May 9, in Clackamas, Oregon, an off duty firefighter with Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue, Scott Brawner, was working out in his health club when he received alerts on his iPhone. He had previously installed the PulsePoint app on his iPhone which alerted him to a nearby man, Drew Basse, who was having a Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) in the parking lot of the gym. A security guard in the parking lot made the initial call to 911, which transmitted the emergency alert to the PulsePoint app. The app immediately displayed the victim's information on a detailed map which pinpointed his precise location, and alerted Scott Brawner. Within a minute, Scott Brawner was in a position to save Drew Basse's life. Brawner immediately commenced CPR, continuing until the paramedics arrived about five minutes later. According to published media reports, the only reason why Basse survived was the prompt application of CPR by Brawner. Scott Brawner is quoted as saying, "I've had a lot of people live throughout my career, but I've never had that one-on-one connection with somebody. I'm really happy how well that app worked. It allowed me to find him so fast ... It's pretty remarkable. ... If I had taken a minute longer to get to him, he would have not survived."

According to a posting on the PulsePoint website ([pulsepoint.org/pulsepoint-respond](http://pulsepoint.org/pulsepoint-respond)), Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) kills 325,000 Americans every year, which is about 1000 deaths per day, or about one death every two minutes. The national survival rate for SCA is less than 8%, which leaves substantial room for improvement; only about a third of the Sudden Cardiac Arrest victims get CPR from bystanders, another statistic that can be greatly improved upon. CPR is a proven method of sustaining life by maintaining circulation to the heart and brain until the paramedics can arrive. Individuals can often provide the potentially lifesaving CPR much faster than paramedics can respond; it takes less than 8 minutes for brain damage or death to occur, a life sustaining time that can be extended with the judicious use of CPR by citizens until help arrives. According to the American Heart Association, the chance of survival doubles or triples if a bystander immediately commences CPR, a fact not lost on the creators of these apps intended to improve the odds of survival of our families and friends.

The concept for these free apps was created by Richard Price, former chief of the San Ramon (California) Valley Fire Department. Price's idea was to enable the millions of CPR trained individuals to be made instantly aware when there was a nearby need for immediate help. The app was developed as a partnership created in 2009 between the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District and the College of Informatics at Northern Kentucky University. The PulsePoint Foundation, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, was formed in 2011 with the stated purpose "to share its life saving potential ... empowering everyday citizens to provide lifesaving assistance to victims of Sudden Cardiac Arrest." At present, the software engineering for the apps is provided by a volunteer staff from Workday, Inc. Following his recent experience, Scott Brawner explained, "The app isn't for firefighters, doctors and nurses. It's for people with smart phones who are willing to provide some CPR to a stranger within a quarter mile or so of their location." In the short time since its release, the PulsePoint app has been adopted by over 600 communities in 18 states.

PulsePoint, and its companion app PulsePoint AED are free apps available for both the Android and iPhone smart phones. According to descriptions provided by the publisher, the intent of PulsePoint was to empower individuals in participating communities to provide immediate life saving assistance to victims of cardiac arrest. Users of the app who may voluntarily indicate that they are CPR trained, may be notified in the event of a nearby emergency where CPR may be needed. In addition of providing the user with a detailed map showing the location of the victim in need, the PulsePoint app, as well as a sister app PulsePoint-AED, may also show the detailed location, including photos, of the closest AEDs (Automated External Defibrillators), which may be very useful in saving lives. For those who may need a refresher, both apps also include an “AED How-to” screen showing the simple steps of the proper use of an AED device, and “CPR How-to” screens which explain the CPR process.

In addition to providing potentially lifesaving information, the PulsePoint app also displays real time information from participating 911 centers, including incidents, and the response status of dispatched units; these results can also be displayed in real time on a detailed map. Some users have used the app to satisfy curiosity about the destination of a nearby EMS or fire unit. Some drivers using the app have also found it useful to determine if there is an accident ahead on the highway, necessitating a reroute in order to avoid the traffic congestion and delays in the area of the incident. Some of the participating fire departments also stream

their radio traffic over the app, making the smart phone a modern version of the old fire scanner radio.

The companion free app, PulsePoint AED, was explicitly designed to, “Help build the most comprehensive registry of AEDs for use during emergencies.” Also available for Android and iPhone smart phones, this app is intended to notify citizen and professional first responders of the closest available Automated External Defibrillator (AED) whenever needed. It has



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been proven that AEDs save lives when utilized in the precious first minutes after a cardiac arrest. One problem with the listings is that there are perhaps many thousands of accessible AEDs that have not been entered into the app's database of AED locations.

The confirmed locations of the AED devices listed are from crowd sourced inputs. Users of the PulsePoint AED app are encouraged to take a photo, and upload the location information through the app. Once the locations are verified by local authorities, the location is added to those available on the app. As I type this, none of the many AED devices on the Lamar University and Lamar Institute of Technology campuses are listed, and none are shown for the downtown Beaumont area, despite my firsthand knowledge that these AED devices are clearly visible in several locations, including some local churches, office buildings, government buildings, and other facilities. While I will personally upload some of the AED locations that

I see on a regular basis, it would be a fantastic community service project for some local groups such as Scouts and Explorers, fraternities and sororities, church groups, and others to participate in. This is one simple project that can literally be a life saver, thus a very worthy undertaking. According to PulsePoint, “You and PulsePoint AED can help strengthen the chain of survival for cardiac arrest victims.”

A quick review of the updated listing of fire departments on the PulsePoint app displays departments in California, Nevada, Colorado, Ohio, Oregon, North Dakota, North Carolina, Virginia, South Dakota, Washington (State), Arizona, and Tennessee that participate in this PulsePoint system; what is woefully missing are departments in Texas and Louisiana, especially in this region. While the apps for the smart phones are totally free, there is a cost to the city that wishes to utilize these services; philosophically, our community leaders need to weigh the costs of the system in terms of lives potentially saved, and then the cost may be a bargain. For a city the size of Beaumont, the annual license fee would be \$5,000, which could easily be underwritten by local philanthropic businesses and individuals. For a city the size of Houston or Dallas, the license fee would be \$25,000, which again could be easily donated by local businesses or organizations. This could be a wonderful opportunity for local organizations and businesses, as well as philanthropists, to participate in a project that could truly save lives, including their own and the lives of family members. The steps to implement the PulsePoint system are available at [pulsepoint.org/implementation](http://pulsepoint.org/implementation).

There is no doubt that we as a society can do a great deal to save the lives of our loved ones in the event of a cardiac arrest, and these apps are but one effective tool that can be used to that end. If we were all to use these free apps, and our communities were to implement such a system, along with continued involvement in CPR training and the judicious placement of AEDs, we may be able to reduce that ghastly 325,000 number of Americans who die of Sudden Cardiac Arrest.

The life that we save may be that of a loved one, or even our own.

Websites:

<http://www.pulsepoint.org/download/>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=mobi.firedepartment>

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/pulsepoint/id500772134?mt=8>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.pulsepoint.aeds.android>

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/pulsepoint-aed/id867150971?mt=8>

<http://www.pulsepoint.org>

<http://www.pulsepoint.org/2014/08/30/pulsepoint-app-helps-save-life-of-cardiac-arrest-victim/>

<http://www.pulsepoint.org/implementation/>

<http://video.foxbusiness.com/v/3752129890001/pulsepoint-app-helps-save-life-of-cardiac-arrest-victim>

<http://www.pulsepoint.org/2014/08/20/court-bailiff-saves-a-life-with-cpr/>

<http://www.menshealth.com/best-life/be-more-bystander>

[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=pulsepoint](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=pulsepoint)

<http://www.pulsepoint.org/2014/08/23/collier-county-sheriffs-office-looks-to-integrate-cpr-app-with-911-system/>

<http://www.pulsepoint.org/pulsepoint-respond/>

## The AskBobRankin Geekly Update

**I**s it getting really hot in here?” Hackers at the Black Hat security conference demonstrated that it’s possible to compromise a Nest thermostat in 15 seconds, and control it from a remote location.

General Motors has announced Super Cruise, an automated driving technology that will enable hands-free lane following, braking, and speed control on highways. But don’t too excited



yet. John Capp, GM's director of global safety strategy, says drivers must still "pay attention" when driving. No snoozing while cruising....

A car chassis inspired by a turtle's skeleton doesn't sound very promising, but it does show off the latest achievements in 3D printing [http://www.wired.com/2014/03/edag-3-d-printed-car/]. Germany's EDAG Genesis engineering group tried even sexier-sounding technologies – selective laser sintering, selective laser melting, and stereolithography – before settling on a modified version of fused deposition modeling.

Internet founding father Ray Tomlinson invented email, according to everyone except India-born scientist Shiva Ayyadurai. He says he invented email when he was 14, in 1978, while "helping out" the dental clinic in Newark, NJ, where his mother worked. There's a book, of course.

"Have you ever borrowed a book from thousands of miles away?" "Have you ever driven cross-country without stopping to ask for directions?" These are two of seven futuristic questions asked in AT&T ads during 1993-1994. The spot-on punchline to each ad is, "You will!" You can view all seven ads in one compilation here.

A smartphone app called Pulse Point allows 911 dispatchers to broadcast a call for help to registered users who are near a medical emergency scene. It brought CPR-trained auto mechanic Jeff Olson to the aid of a month-old baby who wasn't breathing at a dance studio two blocks from his shop. He applied CPR to the infant until EMTs arrived. Tell your police department about Pulse Point: HealthCare.gov, the federal portal to "affordable health care," was hacked and malware was planted on one of its servers, according to a story in the *Wall Street Journal*. The breach went undetected from March until late August, 2014. We're told that the malware only launched denial-of-service attacks against other government servers. But frankly, that makes little sense. HealthCare.gov would be a perfect place to plant a "drive-by download" exploit kit to infect millions of visitors.

Twitpic, the popular picture hosting and URL-shortening service for Twitter users, is shutting down thanks to Twitter's trademark enforcers. But who cares? Twitter added similar functionality in 2011. And according to CNNMoney, the Twitpic terms of service let them take credit for your photos, and keep your deleted images.

Facebook auto-play videos are driving me over my data allowance!" That complaint is flooding many consumer-gripe sites. The fix is simple: on the Facebook app, go to your account settings; click "App Settings," then choose "Auto-play only on WiFi" or "Off."

At least 17 fake cell phone "towers" are intercepting callers' transmissions and routing them to unknown parties, or downloading malware to victims' phones. That's according to experts with ESD America, which just happens to sell a Cryptophone that solves this security problem.

Now you can learn physics online, for free, from the legendary collection of lectures by Nobel Prize winner Richard Feynman. If that sounds boring, how about a list of sub-atomic particle jokes?

"Hey's that's my dog!" Dave McLean with the Center of Geographic Sciences has created an interactive map of over 650 photos of Earth taken from the International Space Station.

Did a passing bird really drop a load on Vladimir Poo-tin during a recent speech? Watch the video and decide for yourself.

If you worked for Apple, and your name is Sam Sung, apparently the obvious thing to do is



auction off your business card on eBay. The highest bid is nearing \$2,000, with two days remaining. If your name is Mike Rowsoff or Gu Gahl, now is the time to act!

People are buying Windows 8 at a rate even slower than they bought Vista, widely considered to be Microsoft's biggest OS failure to date. Worse: Windows XP has more market share than Windows 8 even though Microsoft ended all support for XP last April.

"Take that, Lee Majors!" Prosthetic hands can cost tens of thousands of dollars if you get them from medical technology specialists. Or you can make your own bionic hand from a design freely available online, using less than \$100 worth of parts available at Home Depot.

Thanks, Ed Snowden! Higher search engine rankings are the carrot Google is holding out to webmasters who provide encrypted (HTTPS) connections to their sites, as part of the effort to thwart privacy violations by governments and private snoops. Yahoo is joining Google in making end-to-end encrypted email available to users by 2015.

The Digital Atlas of the Roman Empire lets you explore ancient Rome via a Google Maps interface. This sort of thing is exactly why the Internet was invented.

Waiting for your smartphone to recharge is like waiting for water to boil; even more so with the KettleCharge from BioLite. The company is revered among campers for its twig-burning, gadget-powering portable stoves, but the KettleCharge is equally useful at home or in the field. Boiling water generates thermoelectricity of up to 10 watts, enough to charge a tablet. And you get potable water in case the power grid blows.

Four reasons Microsoft may pull the plug on its Surface tablet line: 1. MS learned with Zune you can't spend your way to success; 2. Steve Balmer is gone; 3. Microsoft is no longer a "devices and services company," says new CEO Satya Nadella; and 4. Tablet sales are plateauing in general.

All cellular carriers must support text-to-911 in all service areas by the end of this year, according to a rule adopted by the FCC Commissioners in a 3-2 vote last week. Now, if only they'd do the same for bus schedule inquiries.

Municipal wireless networks used by police to link surveillance cameras are easily hacked, according to two security researchers speaking at DEF CON. Dustin Hoffman and Thomas Kinsey of tech-support firm Exigent Systems explained that the mesh networks set up with Homeland Security grants have no encryption keys and can be accessed by anyone. "We could do all sorts of tomfoolery – hey, let's have Godzilla walk down the street," Hoffman said. "Or, we could do the opposite and send police resources elsewhere."

Desktops will decline, tablets will slow, and ultrathin notebooks will soar; that's the gist of Gartner Group's revised forecasts for consumer sales over the next three years.

At least his honesty is refreshing ... with 50 million subscribers, Netflix's premium streaming service revenues now exceed HBO's. "They still kick our ass in profits and Emmy's, but we are making progress," said Netflix CEO Reed Hastings.

## What We Can Expect from the Next Decade of Technology

by Greg Satell

### What comes after the iPod decade?

**T**echnology tends to run in cycles. Microsoft ruled the 90s by building essential software for enterprises. Then Apple created a new device driven marketplace in which the consumer was king. What will drive the next decade?

While these things are always hard to predict with any specificity, much of the writing is already on the wall. Humanlike, no-touch interfaces will combine with a pervasive array of

sensors and intelligent back-end systems to form a new Web of Things. Computing will become truly ubiquitous.

This new era of computing will be different than anything we've seen before. Technology will cease to be something we turn on and off, but will become an inextricable part of not only our environment, but ourselves. It is a future that is both utopian and dystopian (depending on your perspective), in that the human experience will change dramatically.

#### 4 Digital Laws

When William Gibson said, "The future is already here – it's just not evenly distributed," he meant that the seeds of the future are sown in the present. While there is no telling the exact composition of the fruit that those seeds will bear, we can expect the stalks to grow according to laws already apparent.

The information economy has been around long enough for us to have identified four digital laws that drive the growth and direction of technology:

**Moore's Law:** Back in the 80s and 90s, when computers first landed on our desktops, we were mostly concerned with processing power, because we wanted to be sure that our hardware would be capable of running the software that made computers useful.

Today, however, most of us pay little attention to processing speeds because we're confident that whatever device we buy will be fast enough. That's because of Moore's law, a principle first identified by Intel cofounder Gordon Moore in 1965 which states that the power of our chips doubles about every 18 months.

**Kryder's Law:** When Steve Jobs first returned to Apple, he revamped the product line and then went searching for the next big thing. An avid music fan, he was disappointed with the primitive MP3 devices on the market and envisioned a new product that would allow him to carry around 1000 songs in his pocket.

In a matter of months, his team identified a supplier which could deliver drives that were both small enough and powerful enough to make good on his vision. The iPod was born and Apple was on its way to becoming the most valuable company on the planet.

Of course, 1000 songs is no big deal anymore. Today's iPods carry 40,000 and you can buy a drive that can play 1000 full length movies for a few hundred dollars, less than the price of those original iPods. This is thanks to Kryder's law, which doubles storage about every 12 months, even faster than Moore's law increases processing power.

**Nielsen's Law:** Even after we stopped worrying about the speed of our computers and our hard drives became big enough that we didn't need to clean out our e-mail archives every month, we still had trouble accessing content because Internet connections were so slow. Now with 4G mobile connections, we scarcely have to worry about it.

This is thanks to Nielsen's law, which observes that effective bandwidth doubles every 21 months. That's quite a bit slower than Moore's law and Kryder's law, which is why bandwidth has historically been such a limiting factor, but at current speeds we can do almost everything we want to and 5G is expected around 2020.

**Kaku's Caveman Law:** Now that we have eradicated most technical limits to everyday use, the most important law to pay attention to is what Michio Kaku calls the "caveman law," which can be stated as follows:

Whenever there is a conflict between modern technology and the desires of our primitive ancestors, these primitive desires win each time.

It is this last law, riding the wave of the previous three, that will drive the next decade of technology. Our devices will become not only vastly more powerful, but also more natural and eventually disappear altogether. Effective computing will become less dependent on expertise and more a function of desire.



## A New Digital Paradigm

While the digital laws may seem to be working steadily on our behalf, the numbers can be deceiving because they actually represent accelerating returns. Simply follow the pace of Moore's law alone and you will quickly realize that we will advance roughly the same amount in the next 18 months as we did in the previous thirty years.

At some point, a difference in degree becomes a difference in kind. Having exhausted most of the possibilities we saw for computers a decade ago, we are beginning to focus our technology on completely new tasks, such as nanotechnology, genomics and energy. Clearly, we are entering a new digital paradigm.

To get an idea of how this will all play out, look at how supercomputing has progressed at IBM. In the 90s it focused its efforts on pure computation, eventually defeating chess champion Garry Kasparov with brute force. In 2011, its Watson computer triumphed at Jeopardy!, a game show that requires intuition as well as intelligence.

Now, IBM is repurposing Watson for human professions, such as medicine, law, and even customer service. The line between man and machine is blurring beyond anything we could imagine even a few years ago.

## Atoms Become The New Bits

There is probably no place the expansion of the digital economy is as dramatic as in the field of manufacturing, which until recently was assumed to be a low tech area best left to sweatshops and cheap labor. Today, as Steve Denning reported in *Forbes*, companies from Apple to GE are finding it makes more sense to keep manufacturing closer to home.

The reason is that we are in the midst of a new industrial revolution where the informational content of manufactured goods is becoming more valuable than the physical content. An array of technologies, ranging from CAD software to 3D printing to lights out factories which are entirely populated with robots, is reinventing the economics of making things.

Just as people gathered in places like the Homebrew Computer Club in the 70s, there are now dozens of fab labs scattered across the globe where hobbyists can meet and build prototypes. These designs can then be manufactured at just about any scale by services like Ponoko and Pololu.

*From the newsletter of the Century Village Computer Club of Pembroke Pines, FL.*



## Help! My Hard Drive is Full!

Q. What happens when an external hard drive runs out of space? Does that mean I have to spend money to buy a new one?

A. When you start to run out of space on your external drive, one possibility is to purchase another, larger drive. A better option is to take a look at your saved files and see if you can thin the herd. Try to make a point of periodically reviewing your files and deleting items you don't really and truly need to save.

Old files are a lot like old clothes in a closet: If you haven't worn something in a year or two (or used a file), chances are you aren't going to need it again, so you might want to think about

deleting it.

**Q.** Help! I need some easy steps to restore my iPhone 4S to the operating system I had before I updated it to the current iOS 7. I don't like the new operating system.

**A.** Unfortunately, you cannot go back to the previous operating system. It's all part of Apple's grand plan to ensure that all users of its devices share the same experience. While every Android device is just a little different – which creates its own set of challenges – Apple mandates conformity in their devices, which has its advantages and disadvantages, as well.

iOS 7 is simply a bit different than what you were accustomed to previously, but like anything, the more you use it, the more familiar it will become. Since you can't go back, you might as well enjoy the journey forward.

The next time there is a major iOS update, you might want to hold off and not install it for awhile. Mrs. Modem isn't using iOS 7 because she didn't want to bother with a new operating system, so she never updated it. That's an option we always have with our current devices.

You will find lots of helpful information on the Apple Web site, including the iOS 7 User Guide at <http://tinyurl.com/MrM-iOS7>. There are also many video tutorials on YouTube, so just search for iOS 7.

**Q.** I recently purchased a Kindle Fire HDX, but I still have a perfectly good first-generation Kindle Fire that I don't need anymore. How can I give it to somebody and not have it still registered to me or my Amazon account?

**A.** With most tablets, all you need to do is perform a factory reset and all of your personal information will be erased. Kindles, because they are tied to your Amazon account, require a two-step process to make sure your personal information is erased and to get the tablet ready for the next user.

The first thing to do is deregister your Kindle so that it is no longer tied to your account. This prevents anyone from purchasing items and having them charged to your Amazon account. Eek! To deregister your Kindle using the device itself, tap the Quick Settings icon, then More > Choose My Account. Select the device you want to deregister and tap Deregister.

You can also deregister by going to Amazon.com, selecting Your Account and choosing Manage Your Kindle > Manage Your Devices. You will see all the devices registered to your account. Choose the appropriate one and tap or click Deregister.

Once the Kindle is no longer connected to your Amazon account you can clear all of your personal information and data off the device in one swell foop. To do this, tap the Quick Settings icon > More > Device. Tap Reset to Factory Defaults. The device will restart and all your information will be gone with the wind: Your books, your apps, your music, your video – poof! Gone.

## **Mr. Modem's DME (Don't Miss 'Em) Sites of the Month**

### **Attack of the Cute**

What's not to like about cute and cuddly animals? Hello, little pit bull; that's a good pit bull. My, what powerful jaws you have. To navigate the site, scroll down through the cuteness and click the Next button.

<http://attackofthecute.com>

### **Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee**

Jerry Seinfeld chats with fellow comedians over a cup of coffee. Hilarious! Each video is approximately 15 to 20 minutes in length and as it is with most comedy today, there is occasional profanity and adult-oriented material. Interviewees include Michael Richards, Carl Reiner, Mel Brooks, Alec Baldwin, Ricky Gervais, Larry David, David Letterman, Don Rickles, Chris Rock, and others. If you like Seinfeld, don't miss these episodes. Some are truly laugh-outloud funny.

<http://comediansincarsgettingcoffee.com/>

## Perspective

This is a thought-provoking visual with narrative. When viewing a photograph of the Earth from such a great distance, the implications may not be immediately clear. Listen as the late astronomer/physicist Carl Sagan explains that we are but a tiny, insignificant speck in the cosmos. Beautifully executed ... and humbling.

<http://tinyurl.com/MrM-Perspective>

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## Learning about Computers

by Richard Durand

*Wisconsin All-computer User Club, WI*

One thing I have found out the hard way is that sometimes knowledge just has to be demanded. On a number of occasions, I have paid good money for educational classes, showed up and patiently waited to be filled up with the useful knowledge I was seeking, and when the class was over, I had more questions than when I started.

Or, don't you just love how this happens? Software companies provide pages and pages of printed safety and warranty information and then for instructions one gets something like, "When the Install screen appears, follow the prompts." What do the prompts mean? How does one decide which of the offered alternatives to select? Blank out. Or has anyone ever said to you as a new computer user, "Oh, just download such and such a program for that"? I have heard this myself and managed to download what was suggested and then found myself flummoxed. Why isn't anything happening? Oh, you're saying the downloaded program has to be installed first. Now, how do I find what I downloaded, which downloaded file is for installing, what drive and folder should the program be installed to, how is the installation carried out, how should it be set up, how does the program work, etc.? The questions can just cascade.

These are probably the most extreme examples that can be cited but the point is that one must be aware that this can happen and when it does, one must be prepared, however tedious and frustrating it may become, to obtain step-by-step detailed instructions. The answers may be in manuals or computer books or in the "Help" file or from telephone tech support, and sometimes from another computer user or club member.

And if the answers are things you already know and/or are not helping, make sure you identify exactly what you are trying to find out and keep looking and asking questions. In the search for knowledge, be demanding both of your sources and of yourself.

And if you are the one helping someone else with a computer situation, try to find out how much he already knows and then give step-by-step instructions as detailed as seems necessary. As I've written in these pages before, there is much technical background knowledge that is just not worth pursuing for the average computer user.

But if you pick your battles and can narrow down what you really need to know, usually in the way of detailed instructions, you can concentrate your efforts and go all out to get what you need to know.

*From the February 2014 issue, WAUCtalk, newsletter of the Wisconsin All-computer User Club, WI. Courtesy of APCUG.*



## Free Mobile App of the Week:

Grab this Text Editor with a Grammar Checker and More  
(iOS and Android)

**G**inger Page is a simple and capable text editor that not only checks spelling but also grammar and punctuation mistakes.

Putting a feather in its cap, Ginger Page has a rephraser as well to discover alternative ways to write your text. Once you finish a sentence, tap the feather icon at the top of the editor and it offers you a list of alternative word choices and sentence structures for clearer reading.

When you're done with your text in the editor, you can conveniently copy your result to the clipboard, tap the Share icon to export your text via a third party app like email or Facebook, or save it as a text file to a cloud service such as Google Drive or Dropbox.

Aside from the above, you get some bonus features from a slide-out menu. These include synonyms, word definitions, a translator and Phrase of the Day, all built into this app at a price of zero.

The Android version of this app doubles up as a keyboard app. When this function is enabled, you are able to check from everywhere you type without opening up the Ginger Page editor itself. But the iOS version designed for both iPhone and iPad does not own a keyboard function, not until the new iOS 8 is launched to allow for third party keyboard apps for the first time.

<http://www.techsupportalert.com/content/grab-text-editor-grammar-checker-and-more.htm>

## Command.com

by Sandy Tsutsui-Trujillo

**O**ne of my nieces tweeted me. It went like this:

**Her:** Hi Aunt Sandy. My laptop is really slow and I'm going to buy a new one. Dad sad I should ask what you recommend.

**Me:** I can take a look a it. How much RAM do you have?

**Her:** RAM???

**Me:** What is the model number?

**Her:** ???

**Me:** The model number is on the bottom of the laptop.

Several days later from her younger sister:

She bought a new laptop and I have the old one. Would you check it?

I forgot that if a high schooler saved her money for a new laptop, she'd already made the decision to get a new one.

I got the laptop and immediately saw several good and bad things.

**Good:**

The camera was covered by a Post-it.

She had a strong password.

She renamed the Administrator account.

She had more than one Administrator account.

**Bad:** Her antivirus had expired.

Her regular account Was an Administrator account.

I did the following:

I installed the free Avast antivirus and ran a full scan. It didn't find any issues.

I created an account under her name without privileges.

I installed the free version of Malwarebytes and ran a full scan. It found a few things. I checked the items and manually had Malware-bytes resolve them.

I usually purchase a standard computer and double the RAM and increase the page file size. I checked the maximum RAM available for that model and I was able to double it.

I installed System Mechanic by IoIo without the antivirus option to prevent a conflict with Avast. I'd purchased it at the Southwest Computer Conference (<http://www.theswcc.org>.) At the Southwest Technology & Computer Conference, it was an unlimited license with a guaranteed renewal price of \$25. It is one of the major advantages of the conference.

System Mechanic found 888 registry issues, 3.15 GB of system clutter, 2,656 fragmented files, 71,454 realignment issues, and 44 potential unwanted applications. (Note: I've had issues with other applications when I've had them automatically resolve potential issues. So far, I haven't killed a computer with System Mechanic.) I had System Mechanic automatically try to resolve everything but the potentially unwanted applications. I wasn't satisfied with the speed. I manually checked the potential unwanted applications that were starting when the laptop booted. I reduced the number to 26 and rebooted it. At this point I was satisfied with speed. I called it a birthday gift, returned it, and told my brother he should run the free version of Malwarebytes manually and let me check their other computers.

Note: I've taken advantage of Microsoft's automatic security settings for Windows 8. I've been impressed with the settings.

## Microsoft Fix It Solution Center

**A**re you having a problem using or understanding certain Windows features? Are you getting error messages you don't understand? Having trouble with audio, video, printing, or getting connected to a network? Maybe you're concerned about privacy, security or performance. If so, the Microsoft Fix It Solution Center might be able to solve the problem with just a few clicks...&

### What Kind of Problems can "Fix It" Fix?

Most of the time Windows works just fine. You point, click, and your program opens; your document prints; your music and videos play. But occasionally, things get fouled up – it could be due to malware, poorly written application software, hardware glitches, or obscure bugs in the operating system.

Perhaps your Word document won't open ...& you can't install a new printer ...& a certain file can't be deleted ...& or maybe your system is freezing up, crashing or displaying error messages that are laden with geeky jargon and hexadecimal codes. The Microsoft Fix It Solution Center can help with these and many other common problems.

There are over 270 solutions in the Fix It Center as of this writing. That's a large number but they're organized well and clearly labeled. In the first step of using the Fix It Center, you can narrow down the scope of your search by specifying what you're having problems with. Step 1 asks you to select a problem area, such as Top Solutions, Windows, Internet Explorer, Windows Media Player, Entertainment, Office, or Other.

If you're not sure which problem area to start with, try Top Solutions. Step 2 asks: "What are you trying to do?" and offers several options:

- Use Desktop features, or open programs & files
- Play games, music, or sounds, pictures or video
- Connect to the Internet or networks
- Install or upgrade hardware or software
- Print, fax, scan, share, or save

- Fix performance, errors, or crashes
- Fix security, privacy, or user accounts

I'm not sure these choices cover all the bases, but they seem pretty comprehensive. After selecting one of the above categories, a list of solutions will appear in the Step 3. You can further narrow your search with keywords, using the Filter Solutions box. For example, if you selected "Install or upgrade software or hardware," you might enter "USB" as a keyword to narrow the list of solutions.

### Run Now or Learn More?

If you don't get the help you need from the Fixit Solution Center, try these links to find other free tools that I recommend:

- Free Troubleshooting Tools for Windows
- Free Anti-Virus Programs
- HOWTO: Clean Up Your Hard Drive
- Fix Windows Problems With System Restore

Search results are displayed 10 at a time by default. Each result consists of a clear "statement of symptoms" such as, "Windows Aero Glass visual effects are not working or displayed."

Well, of course they aren't; most people have disabled Aero Glass and don't recall how turn it on again. But for those rare users who want to re-enable Aero Glass, there's a Fix It Solution; just click the green "Run Now" button to the left of the search result, and you will get the option to run the Fix without saving it to your hard drive or to download a copy to your drive.

If you want details of what the Fix It program will do before you click "Run Now," click on "learn more" under the "Run Now" button. Each Fix It program gives you the option to let it run automatically and apply all of its fixes, or to review the problems it finds and decide for yourself which fix(es) you wish to apply.

Microsoft Fix It Solutions may not always be the best of their breeds. For instance, one Solution promises to "Fix Windows system performance problems on slow Windows computers ...& Automatically trouble-shoot and repair Windows performance problems. Improve, optimize and speed up Windows computers and make slow running PCs faster."

That sounds like the type of work that CCleaner, Privazer, Advanced System Care, and many other third-party tune-up utilities will do. But clicking to "learn more" reveals that this Fix is rather limited. What it fixes...

- Power plan is set to power saver
- More than one user is logged on to this computer
- Multiple anti-virus programs are running
- Several programs are running when Windows starts
- Running advanced visual effects (like Vista transparency) and running multiple programs

at once may affect performance

There's nothing about cleaning up junk files, freeing RAM, correcting registry errors, deep scanning for malware, fixing corrupted Master File Tables, and many other problems that can diminish PC performance.

So, try the Microsoft Fix It Solution Center because it's free and it won't hurt. Another plus is that the solutions are automated. You don't have to perform a series of steps on your own, enter cryptic commands, or manually fiddle with the registry. If you're happy with the results, fine. If not, there are other solutions to most Windows problems. See the inset above for links to related articles with more free, powerful tools to help you solve Windows-related problems.



## Penny says...

Newspaper ads for computers say Windows 8 and display pictures of the tiled “Start” screen. Computer shopping on the Internet reveals a myriad of images of computers with Windows 8 “Start” screen. The captions, descriptions, and tech specs proclaim Windows 8 as the Operating System. The ads specify if it's Touch Screen, how many GB of RAM, size of the hard drive in GBs, type/speed of Processor, and hours of battery life. But, BEWARE, not all Windows 8 are the same. Initially, only Office Depot's ads plainly flagged Windows 8 as “Essential” or “Professional/Entertainment,” but they no longer do so.

If you are thinking about buying an upgrade to Windows 8, the difference becomes more apparent. On the Microsoft website, Windows 8 sells for \$119.99 and Windows 8 Pro for \$199.99. There is also something called the Windows 8 Pro Pack that sells for \$99.99. Here's the difference. If you bought a new computer with Windows 8 or you bought the \$119.99 Windows 8 upgrade, you may get a surprise. The small print says “watching DVDs requires separate playback software.” That's right; your DVD player is useless for watching movies/TV or recording TV. Prior to January 31st, 2013, Microsoft was offering for free its “separate playback software,” Windows Media Center, for PCs running Windows 8. Now, if you want to “add features,” it will cost you \$9.99. There's a caveat – you cannot add Media Center to Windows 8, you can only add it to Windows 8 Pro. So instead of a \$9.99 add-on, you are looking at another \$99.99 for the Pro Pack. Be sure PRO is in the description of the Windows 8 you buy!

Oh, yes, there's more. I bought and downloaded Windows 8 Pro upgrade during the initial promotion (prior to Jan. 31, 2013) for \$39.99. I received the license key during the download and again bye-mail immediately thereafter. Then I took advantage of the free offer by going to the Microsoft website where I had to enter the Windows 8 Pro license key and send it to Microsoft. It informed me I would receive the license key for Media Center within license key for the Windows 8 Pro was no longer the original one, but it had changed to the one I received with Media Center.

Now, let's look at some more small print. Microsoft's license agreement says: “We do not sell our software or your copy of it - we only license it. Under our license, we grant you the right to install and run that one copy on one computer (the licensed computer), for use by one person at a time, but only if you comply with all the terms of this agreement.” If you have a new PC with Windows 8 or Windows 8 Pro already installed from a computer manufacturer or computer installer (OEM version), your copy of the Windows Operating System is licensed only to that one computer.

That means you cannot transfer it to someone else separate from the computer on which it came. If you upgrade the operating system you cannot take the old operating system and put it on a different computer because the license includes not only the upgraded software license, but the license for the original software as well.

If you bought the Windows software and installed it yourself, you can transfer the Windows 8 software to another computer that belongs to you, or to a computer belonging to someone else (if you are the first licensed user and the new user agrees to all the terms of the Microsoft license), only if it is uninstalled from the previous computer and the original media, product key, certificate of authenticity, and any copies of the software are also transferred. The license self-installed software further states:

“You may transfer Get Genuine Windows software, Pro Pack or Media Center Pack software only together with the licensed computer.” That implies that those additional software items

are licensed only to the original PC on which they were installed. Oops! By installing Pro Pack or Media Center Pack we just lost the ability to transfer the operating system.

Read the small print.

## Routers, Thermostats, and Other Trivia

by Don VanSyckel

*Sterling Heights Computer Club, MI*

**M**y wife and I own a condo 'up north', well not that far up. The condo is 30 minutes west of Mount Pleasant so you basically go to Bay City, turn left, and go due west. I've finally convinced our condo association to purchase internet. This would be like any business that provides internet to their customers.

I presented several solutions or options to the board. These options ranged from simple to deluxe. The simple solution was to put one wireless router on the cable modem positioned in a central location like you do at home. This has several disadvantages. First the obvious one is the radio signal might not reach the locations in the complex farthest from the router or be weak and not support full speed. Another disadvantage, to me anyway, is every time someone has a problem I would have to deal with it as administrator of the router. Of course we could let multiple people administer the router but this is a recipe for disaster or at least problems. Then there is the fact that everyone on the router can 'see' each other. I trust all the owners but from time to time some of the condos are rented and who knows who the renters are.

Because I don't feel like writing a small volume about the various other options, I'm going to jump to the deluxe solution. This solution places the cable modem and router out of the way in a central location with the router wireless turned off. Then from the router, switches is used to provide enough connections to run a cable to each condo, the units interconnect and this can be done. Then in each condo the owner can provide their own wireless router that they manage themselves. We can also limit the devices able to connect to the main router to the specific router in each condo. This prevents people from packet sniffing and some other hacking that I won't get into here. When any of the owners have company or renters, they can be told the code to get into that condos wireless and there is no exposure of the PCs in the other units.

There are also other advantages to this approach. The amount of administration on the main router by me goes to almost zero because the wireless (radio) will be turn off. No codes to share. No connecting to the wireless. If someone replaces their router, I'll have to enter the new information so the device can connect. Other than this I believe most issues will be fixed by rebooting or turning the power off and on.

I have wanted to get a thermostat that would allow remote control and reporting. When we had a phone at the condo I check out various thermostats and never found what I was looking for. I have found what I believe to be a network thermostat solution. There is no out of the box solution for this that I could find and I could write a small volume about networked thermostats. The deluxe wired solution above also allows me to connect the thermostat. People leave the setting too low in the summer and too high in the winter and I would be able to correct this. Then there's the case if no one is there for a while and the heat stops working, I want to know so I can arrange for a little human intervention before there's freeze damage.

*From the October 2012 issue of the Sterling Heights, MI Computer Club newsletter.*

## The Lighter Side

Once I was walking a gentleman through the steps to do something – I don't even remember what – when we finished, a dialog box appeared. It offered to do what we wanted it to and had a single button – the OK button.

He sat there for a minute and then, frustrated, asked me what he had to do next.

“Tell the computer ‘OK,’” I said.

He leaned forward and said in a loud but clear voice, “OK!”

