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NEWS AND VIEWS

By Chuck Hajdú

I hate to start out on a down note but has anyone else noticed how expensive things are getting? I'm sure we all are feeling the pain at the gas pumps, but how about other things? You know things like energy and food, those little things that you need every single day.

As we're going through the summer of 2011 it's getting painful to do the things we like to do. A drive to the shore or lake will cost a bundle in gas alone. And the price of food when you get there will take all of the money you have left.

We have had to cut back on our trade show coverage because of travel costs. Air fares have gone through the roof and I doubt if they'll come down any time soon. Hopefully things will start to come down before the big shows at the end of the year.

Speaking of the big shows, we recently found out that the horrible earthquake and tsunami that ravaged northern Japan have seri-

ously impacted several digital camera makers. Production has been impacted to the point that new products that were introduced at last year's PMA Show and CES have been delayed by many months.

As a result of the delays, there are no new products to show and the PMA show has been moved to be a part of CES 2012. That may turn out to be a positive for us because it will mean we can save money on travel by only having to fly to Vegas once instead of twice.

Our new series of articles on tablet computers has led me to this conclusion: there is zero market for tablet computers. What's that you ask? What about the iPad? That's my point exactly. The market is for iPads, not tablets. If I show someone a great tablet, like the Motorola XOOM or the Samsung Galaxy Tab, I will put big money one what that person will ask for at Best Buy. They'll ask for an iPad because that's what they think ALL tablets are. It's the Palm Pilot all over again.

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GOD BLESS OUR TROOPS, AND GOD BLESS AMERICA.



TECHNOLOGY SPOTLIGHT

PLAYAWAY POWERNAP

By Chuck Hajdú

Over the past few months there have been numerous incidents of Air Traffic Controllers falling asleep while on duty. I have an in-depth understanding of this “problem” since I worked as a tower ATCS for 36 years before I retired and became a full-time editor. For many of those years I worked the dreaded Rattler shifts (2 evening shifts, 2 day shifts and an over-night shift followed by 80 consecutive hours off). It was perfect for a father with kids involved in school activities and sports. How did I do it, you ask? Simple, I slept on the mids!

At the vast majority of airports in the US there is very little traffic between midnight and 6AM every day. Most airports have strict noise abatement procedures to severely restrict how many flights are allowed because of concerns for nearby residents getting their sleep. What this means is that you have controllers who are expected to sit in a chair looking out the windows with absolutely nothing to do for 6 hours every night. Nope, no distractions, no reading books or magazines, no TVs or radios, nothing but staring out a window. Could you survive if that’s what your job was like?

Here’s what really happens. Controllers on the mids will either split their shift in half if there are two assigned to the shift. One controller takes a “break” and naps somewhere while the other one works whatever traffic there is. The then swap at about 3AM and reverse positions. When I was a controller the people who regularly worked mids kept a pillow, blanket and alarm clock in their lockers!

If there is only one controller on duty they set up the tower chairs as best as possible to be able to lie down (most towers had one chair that didn’t have any arms to serve as the middle of the “bed”). You turn all of the speakers up real loud so that any radio or land-line calls wake you up so you can respond. Is it dangerous? Sure, you can fall out of a chair easily! Is it dangerous for the flying public? NO it is not!!

Instead of firing controllers for doing something that does no harm to anyone why not work out procedures and schedules with reality built in. It’s truly cutting off your nose to spite your face. It takes years to train a good controller, don’t waste them unnecessarily.

This brings us to the **PlayAway PowerNap** products. During the height of the sleeping hysteria the people at PlayAway came up with a great idea to address the problem in a positive way. Jonathan Husni, the inventor of PowerNap, has offered the NTSB and NATCA (the controllers union) 100 PowerNap CDs and a 50% discount on the PowerNap Machine to try to find a solution to the fatigue problem.

There has been a lot of research done that clearly shows that short “power” naps can reduce stress and increase alertness. The PowerNap people contend that a 20 minute nap using their products has the same affect as a 2 hour nap!

We received the PowerNap Machine, which is a PlayAway self-playing unit with the 20 minute power nap sounds on it. The package contains the player, an AA battery and a set of earbuds.

Setup is simple, the battery is already installed so all you have to do is plug in the earbuds and hit Play.



We put in the earbuds and here’s what we heard. For the first five minutes we heard instructions on setting up the volume and got our brain adjusted to white noise. After that, we listened to white noise that sounded like a waterfall. Finally, after our power nap was up we were awakened by birds chirping.

The big question is: did it work? I would say yes because I did feel a bit more refreshed. By the way, I use a C-PAP machine to sleep so I’m used to “white noise” when I sleep.

My only negative comment is on the earbuds. I highly recommend you get a good set of noise reducing headphones or earbuds to help block out ambient noise.

Prices for the various PowerNap products online are: NapMachine \$69.95, CD-ROM (20 min.) \$9.99, CD-ROM (40 min.) \$9.99, other products are available. www.powernap.com

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF MULTIMEDIA

DRY CASE. OPTOMA PROJECTOR, REBIT 5 BACKUP

By George Harding

Dry Case

Do you like to scuba dive with your iPhone? Do you swim with your iPad? Probably not, but you could with Dry Case.

This is a product engineered to keep any mobile device dry when underwater or when it needs protection from your surrounding environment. It can protect your iPhone, iPad, Blackberry, MP3 player and more.

It has a water-tight seal that keeps water out. You slide your device into the bag, then seal it with the fixture. There is a connection so that you can listen to your radio or music, even with the device inside the bag.



When ready, you exhaust the bag of air with a small bulb, or you can simply suck the air out with your mouth.

Now, you're ready to take a swim or whatever you do underwater. The company says it has tested the enclosure to as much as 100 feet underwater without leakage. So you can scuba dive without worry that your mobile unit will be damaged by the water.

The case comes with the evacuation bulb, a wrist strap you can use to keep your iPhone from wandering off (and it's buoyant, too!), and a lanyard to attach the Dry Case to your belt.



George Harding

The company offers a money back guarantee if there is any water leakage at all. They point out that the key to having a water-tight seal is to be sure to fully exhaust the air from the inside of the enclosure.

Price about \$40 for smaller devices, \$60 for iPad or similar larger devices

www.drycase.com

Optoma Projector

When you need to see your picture or presentation on a big screen, hook your computer into a projection system or furnish your home theater with a world-class projector, you need only turn to Optoma.

Many business people need to give a presentation to small and large groups. The Optoma line of projectors gives you just what you need to satisfy your audience with a bright, clear and brilliant picture.

I was sent an **Optoma Model TX610ST** projector for review. The unit is very compact. It has a small menu system on the top, a large lens on the front and an extensive array of inputs on the back. The base has four rubber feet that can be adjusted for centering the picture where you need it.



The menu system on top needs little explanation. Called Control Panel by the company, it allows you to turn the unit on and off, select the source input, adjust the projected image for non-parallel sides (keystoning) and to bring up a menu. There are two LEDs to show when the lamp is operating and at what temperature.

The menu button brings up a list of controls for all the features of the projector. The menu is displayed on-screen, eliminating the need to carry a manual with you. The on-screen menu has four sections: Image, Display, Setup and Options.

The image settings include brightness, contrast, sharpness, saturation and tint. Each of these may be adjusted to fit the type of image being presented. Display mode is the major control in this section. Settings for the various controls have been preset for the type of presentation, such as movie, blackboard, classroom, presentation and so on. Each of the settings may still be adjusted, if necessary.

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SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF MULTIMEDIA

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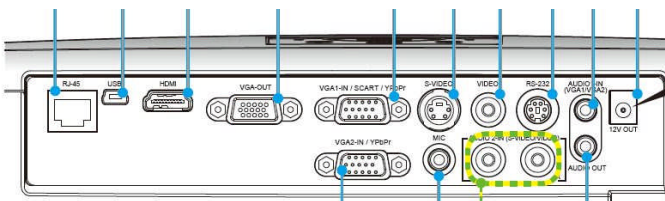
The Display section deals with the type and placement of the display. For example, here you can move the image left or right, up or down and zoom. The shape of the display can be controlled here, too.

Setup includes language (there are 22 different language choices both in the on-screen display and in the User Manual), type of projection (ceiling, floor, front, rear), menu location, signal and security.

The Options section includes high altitude (if on, the fans blow more air), keypad lock, background color (how the display should look when no source is input), power-off timer and various settings regarding the lamp.

Normal resolution is 1280 X 800 with 3100 lumens of brightness. The lamp life is 4,000 hours at normal brightness. Speakers are included in the projector. Input may be VGA, HDMI, RJ-45 network, S-video and more. There is a focusing control on the top of the projector.

The projector comes with power cord, VGA to VGA connector cable, remote with batteries, a CD-ROM containing the User Manual, and a Quick Start Card.



There is a 3 year warranty on the projector, 1 year for the lamp.

Price \$888 to \$950 online
www.optomausa.com

Rebit 5 Backup

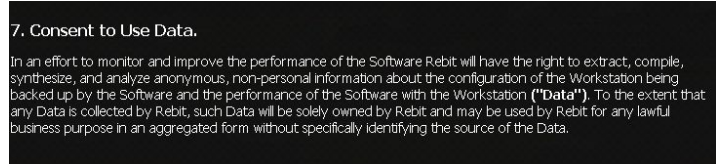
We all know that back-up is important to do regularly. The problem is forgetting to do it, or putting it off to another day because of the pressures of work or home.

Rebit has a solution for you – continuous backup. With this product, you get immediate and complete backup of all your documents, pictures, videos, music and more.

You need to supply a couple of things: a CD-ROM drive, used to install the Rebit software, and a USB external hard drive or network attached storage big enough to store the backup of your system.

Installation is easy. The install CD-ROM starts the process. You select which drive you want to back up to and which to back up from. Next comes the license agreement.

I read the license agreement and had only paragraph which made me wonder. It's titled, Consent to use data." There is no option, since this paragraph is part of the entire agreement. It allows Rebit to "extract, compile, synthesize, and analyze non-personal information about the workstation being used."



The next step is to start the backup process, which may take some time. In my case, it's going very slowly. In fact, it took overnight and more to completely back up this laptop, which has about 60 GB of stuff on the hard drive. Although the initial backup took quite a long time, subsequent backups were much faster.

Once a complete backup is completed, you can browse the backup and choose to restore any given file, or to start the recovery process. As you change files or add new ones, they are continuously backed up. You don't have to do a thing!



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TABLETS AND EBOOK READERS

ARCHOS 101 INTERNET TABLET

By Chuck Hajdú

We have been reviewing tablet computers and eBook readers for several months now and we decided to give them their own column. We'll try to review at least one tablet or eBook reader each month so make sure you read every issue.

A year ago Netbooks were THE hot category. Prognosticators were predicting the pending demise of notebooks and the collapse of the computer world as a result. Today Netbooks are still available but no one is pushing them and new models are few and far between.

What happened? Two things happened, first notebooks were made smaller and lighter taking away much of the Netbooks advantages. Second, the Fruit Company brought out the iPad. Combined they squeezed the Netbook from both ends and have done severe damage to the concept. I still love Netbooks and will continue to travel with mine. I will, however, also have a tablet with me for lightweight tasks.

Now onto our monthly tablet and eBook reader review!

This month's review is on the **Archos 101 internet tablet**. It's clearly designed as an iPad challenger and not an eBook reader so that's how we'll evaluate it.

Over the years we've tested an number of Archos handheld video products and have always thought highly of them. They always had good video quality and solid construction and that's what we hope for here.

Our eval unit was the 16GB model but there is also an 8GB model available. When you look at the small price difference it doesn't make a whole lot of sense to \$30 when it cuts your storage in half.

What's in the box:

- The Archos 101 tablet
- A power adapter with multiple plug adapters for different countries electrical systems
- A miniUSB to USB cable
- User and Quick Start Guides in several languages



The Archos 101 has an impressive hardware feature set and was clearly designed as a real computer in the tablet market. According to the Archos web site it's even capable of dual-boot and they offer a version of Linux. We didn't get a chance to try it but hope to soon.

Here's the hardware set:

CPU: ARM Cortex A8 at 1 GHz with DSP
 Graphic accelerator: 3D OpenGL ES 2.0
 Internal memory: 8 & 16 GB flash memory
 Screen: 10.1" TFT LCD, 1024x600 resolution
 Connectivity: microSDHC, Bluetooth 2.1, 802.11b/g/n, full size USB 2.0
 Video output: miniHDMI

There are also some hardware items that are unique. One of my favorites is the built in leg stand that lets you have view the unit without having to hold it on your lap. It's very effective and works well.



Software:

OS: Android 2.2 Froyo
 The AppsLib for getting more Apps
 Email, browser, photo, music, video, contacts and all of the other standard stuff
 Aldiko, Ebuddy, Wikipedia, Avecomics, HubKap, Deezer, Mewbox, Raging Thunderlite (a 3D car demo game), WordNewspaper, Touiteur, Fring

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ARCHOS 101 INTERNET TABLET

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We tried all of the included software apps and found some of them to be of questionable value. There are no clear instructions for them and the program names are Linux-like so you're just groping around in the dark trying figure out what the heck do things like HubKap, Deezer and Mewbox do. How about Touiteur? It turns out it's a Twitter program with a French accent!!

We did like the AppsLib and used it to find many very useful apps. Of course we immediately downloaded our favorite apps, Cribbage and Facebook because we can't live without them on any tablet. They also provide a good way to evaluate performance in comparison to other units (yeah, right!!).

One of the techniques you'll need to learn when you use any handheld device is how to hold it. We ran into two minor quirks with the Archos 101 that you'll need to be aware of. First, the area below the processor on the yop of the unit gets warm to the touch. It doesn't get uncomfortably hot, just warmer that we expected.

Secondly, if you have big hands and fingers like me then you need to be careful not to overlap the front of the unit. If you do then you'll end up hitting the touch pad and doing things you hadn't planned on doing! Don't worry too much though, that's what the BACK arrow is there for!

During our testing we used the 101 for long periods of time unplugged and were very impressed with it's battery life. With both WiFi and Bluetooth turned on we did a normal day's worth of web surfing, emailing, weather checking and game playing and still had over 50% battery left. Very impressive!

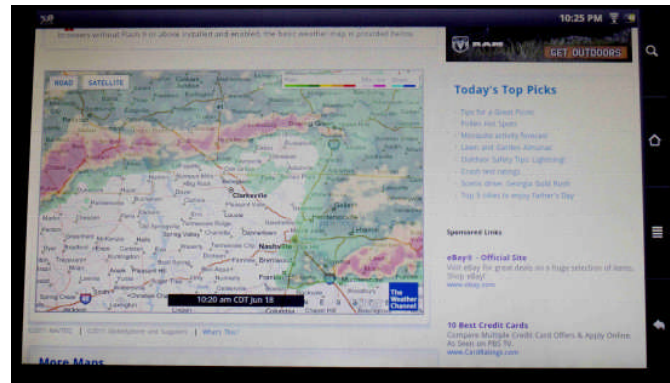
One of our regular tests is reading our eMag on a tablet. We've encountered problems with every tablet we've ever tried before this. Once again we went to the AppsLib for a PDF reader and downloaded the app **PDF Viewer**. It works perfectly and we were able to read our eMag effortlessly. We just emailed the eMag to a Gmail account and saved to file to the 101. We were the able to read it whenever we wanted to. This is something everyone should do!

There were also several other apps that made this a great every day product. Here are some of my favorites. World Newspapers is a real eye-opener. It pro-

vides free links to newspapers from all over. We set up our local Clarksville and Nashville papers as Favs and always had the latest news at our finger tips.

The Nook reader turned out to be surprisingly good. It provides a link to the Barnes and Noble book system and works very well. We bought several books and were able to read them on the 101 screen under all light condition. This is a really great value-add.

The browser app took internet access on a tablet to a new high. We used it in landscape mode and it was wonderful. It worked just like a browser on a Netbook. There was enough real estate to read everything easily and response speed was very good.



The only complaint we have is that the Weather Channel animated maps didn't work and we just had single pics.

Because the Archos 101 has both Bluetooth and a full sized USB port it gave us a chance to try out some external peripherals that we've never been able to use with a tablet before. We have been waiting to test some mice and keyboards and this was a perfect opportunity.

Our first experiment was using a **Genius SlimStar i815** wireless keyboard and mouse combo. This combo has worked very well on Netbooks using WinXp, Win7 and Ubuntu 10.04 and we wanted to see if it would work with Android. We plugged in the dongle and waited a few seconds for the system to identify the new hardware. We didn't notice any activity and weren't sure it was working or not. However, we found out all was well when we noticed the mouse cursor moving and the mouse clicking. It was working!

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ARCHOS 101 INTERNET TABLET

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Genius SlimStar i815 Wireless Combo

The next step was to open an app that could take advantage of a keyboard. We opened the ColorNote app, a wonderful note taker, using the mouse instead of the touch screen and immediately started typing using the i815 full sized keyboard. The built-in stand on the Archos 101 made it perfect unit for typing with a keyboard. It turns a tablet into a Netbook! With a much bigger keyboard and was very cool! We can see this as a great trade show combo, a tablet that we can use on the show floor using the touch screen for quick notes and using a keyboard and mouse back in the hotel and on the airplane for real writing. This is an unexpected value-add and it's something every user should have
www.geniusnet.com

Next we tried a **Logitech Couch Mouse M515** that we reviewed last month. It's a fabulous mouse that works on any surface and wirelessly. We've used it on soft and hard surfaces, including our bare legs! We plugged in the dongle and were gratified to see it was working perfectly. Our next test however wasn't as successful. We opened ColorNote again and planned on using the built-in keypad and not a mouse. Unfortunately, nothing we did could get the keyboard up. It seems like it expected a keyboard/mouse combo and not just a mouse. Oh well, it was worth a shot.
www.logitech.com

The next product we tested was the **iTablet Thumb Keyboard**, a Bluetooth keyboard and touchpad. Our unit was a pre-production test unit but we thought it would be a perfect test environment. It certainly was interesting.

The iTablet keyboard has the QWERTY keyboard on one side and a rear facing touchpad on the other side. It's an original idea that takes some getting used to.

The keyboard uses Bluetooth 2.0 to connect to many different devices. Everything from iPads, iPhones, PS3, Xbox 360, Win8, WinV, WinXp, Android, Linux and Fruit OS 10.28 and later.



The User Manual is very well done and covers connecting to each of the various OSs that are supported. For Android 2.2 and newer the procedure is: turn on Bluetooth on the tablet's settings, then turn on the keypad and wait for the Bluetooth light to start flashing. Then Scan for Devices on the tablet. After the keyboard is found enter a passcode, 0000 or 1234, on BOTH devices. The keyboard and tablet should be connected.

We were able to connect to the 101 intermittently but were never able to maintain a connection and pairing long enough to make the keyboard useful. At this point we'll have to call it a work in progress.
www.itablet.com

What we liked:

- Screen size and brightness are excellent
- The full sized USB port rocks
- WorldNewspaper is a wonderful app
- Battery life is awesome
- The built in stand

What we didn't like:

- The area under the CPU get a bit warm when you have your hand under it
- The touch screen response can be slow, learn to be a bit more patient
- We had occasional lockups when using the USB dongle for a keyboard/mouse

Recommendation: The Archos 101 is without a doubt the best tablet we've tested so far. If you're in the market for an iPad alternative using the Android OS the this is what you want. It is highly recommended.

MSRP is \$329.99 for the 16GB model and \$299.99 for the 8GB model
www.archos.com

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

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When your backup drive begins to reach its limits, the Rebit software will begin to delete the oldest files that have been saved. Note that you always have a complete system back-up. If you run out of space on the back-up drive, you can add another.

Rebit 5 will periodically check for updates on its own. You can check yourself at any time, as well. Rebit 5 keeps itself updated automatically.

If you have concern about someone accessing your back-ups without authorization, you can set a password in the software.

Restoring your back-up requires that once Rebit 5 is installed, you make a recovery CD or you can download one from the web site. This CD has the necessary files to allow it to boot into Rebit 5, even if your computer won't boot. You can then install the backed-up files to the internal hard drive.

This software is very easy to use and doesn't require involvement from you after the install. The only disadvantage is the lengthy initial back-up. There's no ways around that, with this software or any other. Once done, though, you probably won't notice that continuous back-up is occurring. There is no noticeable slowdown.

There is a 30-day free trial available.

Price for download about \$20 for one PC, \$40 for 3 PCs.

www.rebit.com

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SAMSUNG ES80

By Diana Meade

I have been a fan of Samsung digital cameras for quite a while now. The first camera I reviewed for this eMag was the Samsung TL100, the best compact camera ever made. I'm telling you this so everyone will understand my frame of reference, I'm a Samsung camera lover.

In many ways the ES80 reminds me of the TL100, both are very compact and even more obvious, both

are of the cameras I got to review are red. The ES80 also comes in silver and black if you're into dull colors. Personally, I love the red ones!



What's in the box:

- The camera
- A USB cable and USB AC adapter
- A camera strap
- A software disc and a manual

Technical stuff:

- Sensor: 12.2 megapixels
- Lens: 4.9-24.5mm (35mm equiv. 27-135mm)
- Aperture: f/35.-5.9
- Shutter: 1/8-1/2000 sec. in Smart Mode
- LCD: 2.4" TFT
- Weight: 6 ounces!

One of the reasons I have always loved Samsung digital cameras is their use of the USB connection to recharge the battery. There's no need to remove the battery and put it into a charger, you just plug it into a USB port and it recharges and makes the data on the SD card readable to your computer. It's perfect. It takes the concept of using a cradle one step further. It's a non-cradle cradle!

As with most compact digital cameras the ES80 has program modes for virtually any situation you might encounter. The Smart Mode evaluates the image you're about to shoot and switches to what it thinks are the most appropriate settings. It's interesting to see how quickly the system does it's evaluation and how accurate it is.

What did we like:

- The USB charging system
- Smart Mode
- The weight

What did we not like:

- It's a tad thicker than we'd like, but just a tad
- Flash performance is a bit week

Recommendation: The Samsung ES80 is a great compact camera and I recommend it, especially at the price!

MSRP is only \$99 and it's available for even less www.samsung.com

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SOUTHWEST COMPUTER CONFERENCE

By Bayle Emlein

The 18th Annual Southwest Computer Conference
San Diego, California, 3-5 June 2011

Longing for CES? Too much time to wait from one January to the next and too far to go to SinoCES or CEBit? Try the Southwest Computer Conference in easy-to access San Diego.

Can you believe it? For eighteen consecutive years a good-sized group of folks have had the good sense to come in out of the Southern California summer sun and bury themselves in piles of silicon and how-to discussion.

Starting Friday afternoon with **Abby Stokes**, author of *Is This Thing On?* and running through Sunday noon, a variety of keynotes and concurrent workshops provided the opportunity to find out what's new at the end of Second Quarter 2011—and what's promised—in the world of technology.

Abby teaches the old-fashioned way: through stories and analogies. Her goal is to educate people so that they can make an informed choice about how they use technology, or choose not to. She discussed some of the basics of social networking. Facebook is a website where people share whatever they want about themselves and can keep in touch with distant friends and relatives, almost in real time if they upload quickly. One caveat: you don't have to tell the truth and neither does anyone else.



A word from Abby about passwords. Three. That is, you need three of them. One for email accounts (yes, you want more than one so that you can control how

and when you manage different kinds of email, one for banking and only banking, and one for everything else.

Assume that everything you put on the Internet—including in Facebook—is public information. You can't control who is going to forward what to whom, or when. Take it for granted that anything you send out is posted in REALLY BIG LETTERS or billboard-sized pictures on your front door or will be soon.

Twitter has a different structure than Facebook. Because of the limitation to 140 characters per message, abbreviations have become common. CUI8tr. Twitter doesn't have Friends. You Follow other people or they Follow you. As on Facebook, you have no obligation to tell the truth and no guarantee that anyone is telling you the truth or has not been hacked or impersonated.

Andy Marken of **Markencom.com** talked about the future of storage. (We'll use more, need even more, and become more vulnerable as storage moves Cloudward as a way of avoiding the restrictions of local physical media.)



Alex Eckelberry, General Manager of **GFI**, presented the new face of online security. You may have gotten to know familiar with the GFI flagship product, Vipre Antivirus, when it was offered by Sunbelt Software. It's still the same forward thinking product that identifies suspicious behavior even before malware or a specific invader has been identified, isolates it, and cleans your computer. GFI has recently acquired Sunbelt, but Alex is still with the product and looking forward to adding Vipre Mobile for Android phones to the Vipre line-up. As cell phones become a popular platform, they become a

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SOUTHWEST COMPUTER CONFERENCE

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popular target and Vipre is ready to address the challenge.

Matt Mardini of **Wolverine Data** showed off the Wolverine line of products digitize various other formats, including audio tapes; film negatives, slides, and photos. The Wolverine portable scanner is really small enough to fit into your computer case along with your other gear. It works, easily converting a printed page to a JPG.



Thomas Ford, Global Communications Manager for **Opera**, presented the Norwegian browser. Currently there are about 2 billion people online. About 3% of them use Opera on different devices, including Wii, Ford trucks, picture frames. Opera has more tools to do more things more easily and faster than other browsers. The company has made an effort to keep functionality while making it easier to use. Alternative browsers keep the big companies on their toes and honest.

Opera Mini operates on more cell phones than any other browser. Speed dial extension in the next version of Opera lets you choose the instant access buttons you want to keep on top. Tab browsing started in Opera. Accidentally close a tab? Get all your history and info back out of the Trash Bin. In Opera 11 the user can group tabs. Hover over a tab and get a thumbnail description. An icon in the address bar tells the level of security on a



page. Opera Turbo reduces the size of a page, speeding access --especially helpful when on dial-up or a crowded WiFi location. Being small, Opera is challenged to try harder. The company can also be more agile and responsive to threats.

Evelyn Watts, Field Services Manager for **Corel**, blew everyone's sox off with her demonstrations of Corel graphics applications. With Painter 12 and a pressure-sensitive graphics tablet, you have at your fingertips the equivalent of a complete palette of water colors, oils, acrylics, pencils, and charcoals. Except that your paints never dry out, you never run out of Burnt Ochre just before you finish painting the yellow brick road. Clean up is a snap, (or rather a mouse click) and there are no toxic solvents anywhere in the package. For those of us with less than artistic hands, Undo without wasting a single canvas or piece of paper. PaintShop Photo Pro X3 provides tools to repair or improve photos. Easily remove pesky power lines from scenery, or the proverbial ex from the group shot. For people who just must get work done, Corel Office X5, WinZip 15, and PDF Fusion simplify work tasks and improve productivity.

What follows is a rather random selection of workshop offerings. For each one reported there were three that could not be covered.

What a surprise. Not. Judy Tylour filled a room to overflowing by presenting a brief introduction to some 25 free resources to make one's computing life safer and simpler (or more complicated as more options open up).



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SOUTHWEST COMPUTER CONFERENCE

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Shuly Partush of **SafeTREC** presented the SafeTREC solution to mobile safety and emergency access. Once the SafeTREC safety network is set up, a single Panic Button—which can be set as any key—

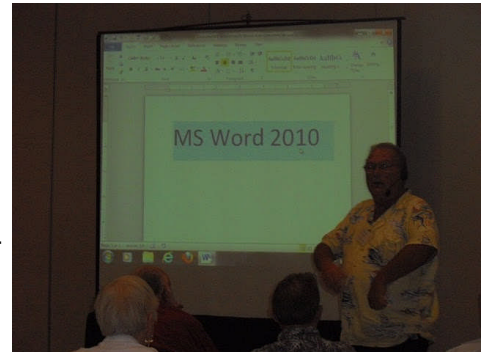


logs into the 24/7 network and appropriate problem-solving actions are set in motion. A text message can be sent in situations where talking might not be safe and an Escalation Code overrides other messages to indicate extreme danger where the speaker cannot talk. The database lets a user know the safety record of an area, very handy when in a strange city.

Gini Pedersen walked attendees through the basics of eBay and online auction bidding in general. EBay is not the only auction site, just the best known. For example, there is YouBid. There are kinds of products that sell and those that don't on an auction site. The write up and picture are very important as is the feedback a seller accumulates, which buyers can use to evaluate the reliability of a seller. When shopping via a Search, it works best to start with a broad search and gradually refine it so that you don't cut out desirable items because you've used a different term than the seller. Be warned that neither eBay nor any other reputable company will send an email asking you to click on a link or send personal information.

Bruce Aronson explained **Tips and Tricks You Might Have Missed in Word 2010**. The design plan for Word 2010 is that the tabs contain items most used moving left to right. And the operations move from left to right: What you do earlier in writing is most likely to show up under tabs more to the left. Styles have become Themes, under Page Layout. Users can build their own Themes. One can do the

same in MS Publisher, where it's called Schemes. Have you wondered why the new extension is .docx? Word now uses XML. Under the Review Tab, Compare clearly shows differences between two versions of a document. The computer, er Word, catches every single difference. It never suffers from sleep deprivation or notices that it's being asked to work late on a Friday.



Abbas Mehdi, Product Manager for **lolo Technologies**, joined a session of user group representatives who were discussing strategies for improving their club operations. He stressed how important lolo feels user groups are to promoting information about technology.



Next month we'll have Part 2 of our coverage of the Southwest Computer Conference.

CONTENT INSIDER

!ANYTHING IS THE ANSWER... WHAT WAS THE QUESTION?

By Andy Marken



"All you have to do is follow three simple rules. One, never underestimate your opponent. Expect the unexpected. Two, take it outside. Never start anything inside the bar unless it's absolutely necessary. And three, be nice." – Dalton, "Road House" (1989), Silver Pictures

If Steve Jobs had a Facebook page, he'd probably have more "likes" than, well... anyone. He doesn't though, he prefers Twitter... yeah, right! Some people even go beyond liking Steve. Remember the guy at Apple's WWDC (Worldwide Developers Conference) who blurted out, "Steve, we love you."? Cupertino city council had a similar view when he presented Apple's super concept for the company's new campus. Come on, the spaceship is cool. It'll be great to see a building in the Valley that isn't just another tilt-up slab.



New Home – Like it or hate it, there's a fit/finish/design of an Apple product that people try their darndest to copy. Writers constantly urge companies to make "a better than Apple solution"– an iPhone killer, an iPad killer, a Mac killer. We suppose now there will be a rush for companies everywhere to have an Apple killer home.

It's a helluva' recruitment tool... "O.K., kid, how much do you want to pay to work at our super cool company?"

The back-to-back events exemplify what Apple does best... manage perception.

Too many folks hold Steve in awe like Apple begins and ends with him. They overlook the fact that he has brought together probably the best management team you've ever seen.

J.C. Penney thought so when they sweet-talked Ron Johnson, Apple's retail head, to rejuvenate the aged brand. That team has created a darned good hardware/software/service mix that people believe was designed just for them... really.

Folks buy their products because they're elegant. For the most part, they just work... when they have a problem, it's their fault.

You know:

- Macs don't crash
- Macs don't get viruses
- AT&T caused all the iPhone problems (the ones Verizon now experiences)
- iPhone antenna problem, hold the phone differently
- iPhone screen breaks when the unit's dropped... don't drop it

Apple simply manages its perception better than any other company in the world.

He may have some engineering in him, but Steve cares about design look/feel first.

People simply have a hard time looking past the Steve halo effect.



Perception Incarnate – The aura of Steve attracts followers from near and far. Why would anyone insist on flying halfway around the globe to stand in line for hours to be one of the first to pay big bucks to buy their iWhatever? Then stand in the same line to get the updated version and the next updated version? For Apple, it's money in the bank. **Image Source - Gizmodo**

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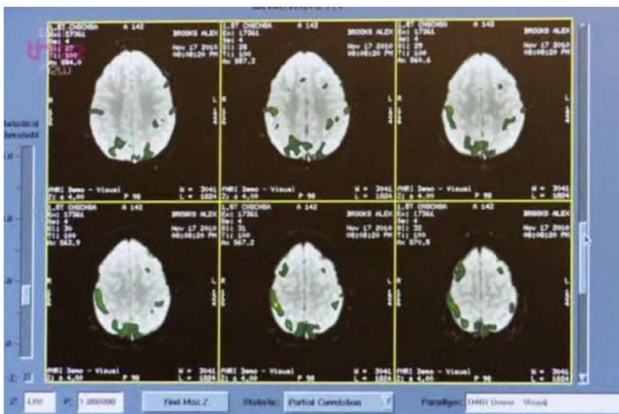
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You know – WWSD, WWSJD (what would Steve do, what would Steve Jobs do).

Morgan explained it a different way, *“If you're not drinking, you're outta here!”*

Thousands – competitors, academics, wannabes – have struggled to pinpoint the reasons people’s eyes glaze over when he takes the stage.

Recently, the BBC showed a documentary where UK neuroscientists suggested the brains of Apple devotees are stimulated by Apple imagery in the same way that the brains of religious people are stimulated by religious imagery.



Your Brain On – For those who live and breathe Apple solutions, they have the ones that are here today and think about those that will replace them. Who knew fruit was addictive? **Source - BBC**

Yeah, that might explain it. Lots of people want to know how they can produce the same messiah effect when they enter a room. You know, folks like Ballmer (MS), Schmidt (Google), Apotheker (HP), Zuck (Facebook), Stringer (Sony) and people in public office. Jobs simply repeats Dalton’s philosophy, *“I want you to be nice until it's time to not be nice.”* Jobs and his team use social engineering to the nth degree. Just look at the “spectacular” breakthrough announcements he made.

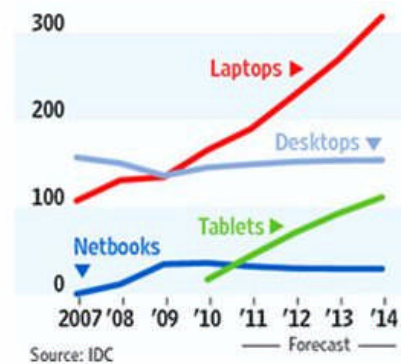
Death of the PC
Steve said that Apple’s announcements would kill the PC.

Well, Yeah!

But don’t tell an engineer, scientist or serious gamer that the combination of a tablet and the cloud is all he/she will need. It ain’t gonna’ happen!

Desktop/server sales may be growing more slowly, but sometimes growth needs a breather.

More Alternatives
Global shipments, in millions of units.



PC Killers – People hear the Apple announcements and repeat the words...the iPad/tablet will change PC usage, the iCloud/any cloud will eliminate PC usage. The words are so strong, every manufacturer rushes to make their copies or stake out their own cloud. Of course, Apple executives don’t suffer from that distortion field because they keep refining their computer solutions while they extend their product lines and open new virtual and real stores. **Source - IDC**

Yes, the iPad and the Mac Air were wakeup calls for notebook makers (and suppliers).

Apple made a great decision by making their OS work across all platforms – phones, tablets, computers.

MS is working in that direction, knocking down their product/technology silos and starting to think/act as one team.

A netbook–Chrome, Ultra, whatever – works with the cloud and everyone knows big, fast connectivity is just everywhere. And when you’re in the cloud, you’re as safe as you are driving in Italy’s traffic.

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The choice, of course, is a really thin, featherweight unit with a 64GB SSD (solid-state drive) or a thin, pretty light unit with Toshiba's new 1TB notebook HD...gee, tough choice.

Tablets (iPad) are so cool even her highness Queen Elizabeth II had "her people" go out and buy one for her after using William's and Charles' devices.



iStuff is for Kids – A lot of marketing types get the idea that only kids are buying the new iProducts for doing all their stuff in social media. Boomers and beyond are buying, embracing, adoption the new hardware/software/services just as fast and it's only the smart marketers that reach out to them. They are also more loyal to the folks who help them make the right product solutions, get the right support. **Image – Royal Archives**

Yes, she has a Mac and some kind of smartphone; but she thought the iPad would be great for looking at pictures, watching movies/videos, playing games, reading on her many long trips.

True, some companies that are getting tablets for employees to use and there are some excellent applications emerging (healthcare is ideal); but the tablet is still viewed as a personal device.

There's the distortion use zone – work, play, everything – and there are the real uses.

In March, ABI Research found netbooks (Chromebook, Ultra, Mac Air, etc.) and tablets are neck-and-neck in terms of consumer interest.

- 25% of respondents were interested in getting a netbook

- 27% were interested in an iPad/tablet

- 60% didn't see a need for either

People intent on getting a tablet sorta' agreed with the Queen. Their uses would be:

- 82% intend to use email

- 71% expect to use a web browser

- 57% plan to watch TV or download movies

- 56% intend to use social networking

- 55% plan to play games

Purchases of these companion devices mean folks will prolong their PC's lifecycle and delay replacement. At least that's the way it's working in our family.

You'll Work, Play, Live in the iCloud

Cloud storage isn't new. Businesses haven't embraced public clouds because they just aren't manageable, aren't safe/secure.

Public cloud services like DropBox have "issues" because of the way they gather/use user information and lose stuff.

Dalton looked at it and commented, *"You're too stupid to have a good time."*

iCloud is a pretty good storage/syncing solution:

- You can store a whole 5GB of stuff there. Want more storage? It will come at "some" price, but other public clouds offer more capacity

- Users need to entrust the security of their data to Apple and that information can potentially be accessed any Mac, PC, iOS-based device over the open network

- It automatically/seamlessly syncs documents, photos, contacts, apps, e-mails, other content with Macs, PCs (Win7 or Vista), and iOS-based devices. If you've ever tried to do it manually...it sucks!

NOTE – Apple devices work best

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Photo – ZD Net

Cute Cloud – Cloud service isn't new. Document, file syncing isn't new. It doesn't matter when Apple "announces the breakthrough" it's new, bigger, better, destined for greatness. Of course, you notice those are all Apple devices, apps from their stores. Works great in this environment. Others are allowed in, it's just that doesn't work "quite" as well. **Photo – ZD Net**

Yes, iCloud—any cloud service —will:

- lose stuff – irreplaceable personal/family photos/videos, important documents
- be hacked – the more potential, the more the temptation
- be unavailable from time to time

As Dalton said, "It'll get worse before it gets better." That's why we thought Seagate came up with a slap-in-the-side-of-the-head solution – a WiFi portable HD.



Swwwwееееtttt – Apple fans may agree with company statements that 32 or 64GB of solid-state storage is all anyone really needs because they'll put everything in the cloud (that big 5GB), but in the back of their mind they want more storage. Seagate's 500GB Wi-Fi HD is a reason to buy an iPad. It not only has its own power, it's much less of a hack target than the big beautiful cloud. **Source - Seagate**

Throw the stuff you don't care about up in the cloud and keep the stuff that's special/private on the Wi-Fi drive.

It sure shuts you up about the lack/shortage of USB ports doesn't it?

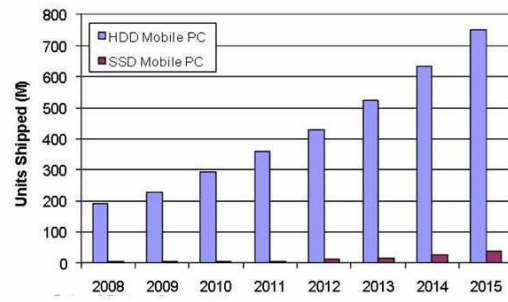
Mobile Device Storage

Mobile devices – notebooks, netbooks, tablets, and smartphones – are rapidly becoming main-stream. That's especially true of people who are doing more and more computing with their devices.

And while SSD has a lot of advantages, it will be years and tens/hundreds of millions of devices before it replaces HDs.

It has something to do with the reliability of the iNet connection, the capacity/reliability, security.

Mobil Computing



Source – Coughlin Associates

HD, SSD – Instant-on capabilities and low power consumption are super reasons to buy an SSD-based device. But the newest notebooks are better, lighter, faster than those of a year ago and with 500GB/1TB internal drives you can carry, work on, use, show, share your everything even when the cloud isn't available or has somehow disappeared. Working mobile devices won't go away anytime soon. **Source – Coughlin Associates, Objective Analysis**

The iPad and other tablets are for a little bit of work and a whole lot of downtime, according to a recent Vision Critical study:

- browsing – 64%
- photos, music, video – 58%:
- access/use apps – 54%
- news/information – 51%
- books, newspapers, magazines – 51%
- communications/social networking – 50%
- shopping – 41%
- games – 34%

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Management and new kids will bring their devices to work. They'll use them in the office. The boss will say support my iPhone, iPad, Mac; protect my data. IT will say "Yep!"

The secret, the difference... "It's an Apple."



Consistency – Now this is the real Apple secret – a consistent look and feel. Steve doesn't have to think about what he's going to wear, so he can focus all of his attention on making pretty darn good products and compelling messages. Other companies don't have that luxury. New bosses every couple of years, new marketing/promotion people who obviously know the last stuff was horrible so they rollout a new idea, new campaign. New stuff from an image you instantly recognize has a lot of street credibility.

Others change bosses, change messages, change look/feel every time they turn around.

It's a familiar signpost in a constantly changing, uncertain world:

- "the future of (fill in the blank)"
- "One more thing"
- Image
- Perception
- Consistency

Dalton calmly pointed out, "Take the biggest guy in the world, shatter his knee and he'll drop like a stone."

It's all part of the Apple Way ...



As Dalton said... "Sorry, we're closed."

MCC

Jeffersonian wisdom - *If the present Congress errs in too much talking, how can it be otherwise in a body to which the people send one hundred and fifty lawyers, whose trade it is to question everything, yield nothing, and talk by the hour?*

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Editorial offices and testing lab:

3907 Rhonda Court
Clarksville, TN 37040-7507

Contact us at:

Phone & fax: (270) 423-3161

Email: MCCEditor@aol.com

[HTTP://MCCPUBS.BLOGSPOT.COM/](http://MCCPUBS.BLOGSPOT.COM/)

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I call that bold talk from a four-eyed fat man.

LS/MFT

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Editor -	Charles Hajdú	ChuckHajdu@MCCPubs.net
Emerging Technology -	Linda Webb	LWebb@MCCPubs.net
Contributing Editor -	Megan Ehrhard	MeganEhrhard@aol.com
Contributing Editor -	Bayle Emlein	BEmlain@MCCPubs.net
Technical Editor -	Tim Ehrhard	TEhrhard@MCCPubs.net
Columnist -	Jan Fagerholm	jan-f@pacbell.net
Columnist -	George Harding	GHarding@MCCPubs.net
Columnist -	Diana Meade	DMeade@MCCPubs.net
Columnist -	Kate Meade	KMeade@MCCPubs.net
Columnist-	Bob Sanborn	robert@pcil.com
Columnist -	Lee Schwab	LSchwab@MCCPubs.net
Columnist -	B. T. Woody	BTWoody@MCCPubs.net

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