



PC LABS TESTS

Hot New Apple Updates

- iMac and Mini Desktops
- MacBook Pro Laptop
- iPod Shuffle

Clickfree: Super Simple Backup

HOW TO SHARE EVERYTHING

Get Started on YouTube, Flickr, Facebook, and more



• VIDEO •



• PHOTOS •



• MUSIC •



• DOCUMENTS •

PLUS **Spring-Clean Your PC!**



46

COVER STORY **SHARE EVERYTHING ONLINE**

This is the definitive guide to uploading your videos, photos, music, and documents to the Web and sharing them with friends, family, and colleagues.

61

BLUETOOTH HEADSET GUIDE

Isn't it time you went hands-free? Here our experts offer you buying advice and reviews of the latest in Bluetooth technology.





FIRST LOOKS

14 **HARDWARE**

Apple iMac (Nvidia GeForce 9400M)

Clickfree HD325

Dell Studio XPS 435

Plus Quick Looks at the Apple Mac mini, Lenovo Y650, and more.

20 **BUSINESS**

Ipswitch Imail Server Premium v10

Outright.com

Xerox Phaser 6180MFP/N

Acer H233H bmid

25 **CONSUMER ELECTRONICS**

Sharp Aquos LC-52D85U

Apple iPod shuffle (3rd generation)

Shure SE115

Motorola i335 (Boost Mobile)

Plus Quick Looks at the Palm Treo Pro, Verizon Hub, and more.

32 **SOFTWARE**

LastPass 1.50

CyberLink DVD Suite 7 Ultra

Mint.com

Plus Quick Looks at Amazon MP3, MLB 09, and more.

80 **THE BEST STUFF**

LETTERS

5 **FEEDBACK**

TECH NEWS

7 **FRONT SIDE**

Touch capability in Windows 7; a new tack on piracy; show report from the Game Developers Conference; secure storage drives.

OPINIONS

3 **FIRST WORD: LANCE ULANOFF**

38 **JOHN C. DVORAK**

40 **DVORAK'S INSIDE TRACK**

42 **SASCHA SEGAN**

44 **DAN COSTA**

SOLUTIONS

68 **DEEP-CLEAN YOUR PC**

We show you the best ways to clean your PC—inside and out.

72 **OFFICE**

Use Outlook to find a new job or other opportunities.

76 **SECURITY**

What to do if you're a victim of data theft.

78 **TECH TIPS**



FIRST WORD LANCE ULANOFF

Web 2.0 Is Not Doomed —It Doesn't Exist!

When it comes to proclamations of disaster, demise, and disintegration for technologies, companies, and products, I'm as guilty as the next guy. I can point to wrong-headed columns about Twitter and Facebook, and then more prescient ones about the Zune and the Nintendo Wii.

My targets, however, tend to be actual products, not vague groupings that represent someone's idea of a collection of unrelated entities. So pardon me if I got a little angry when I heard this statement from Elevation Partners cofounder Roger McNamee, who, speaking on CNBC, said, "Web 2.0, which seemed to hold a lot of promise, did not develop.... The vast majority of [Web 2.0 businesses] are going to cease to be viable businesses." Almost immediately, this led others to say, "Web 2.0 is doomed."

Give me a break.

Web 2.0 is more or less the second generation of Web sites and services that emerged after the dust had settled from

the first dot-com bubble and bust. Many of these Web sites integrate social interaction, and they also do more than Web sites of the 1990s and early 2000s.

Within a few years people started talking about "Web 3.0." This annoys me because it assumes that Web 2.0 has some real meaning. It doesn't. It's just a label for a bunch of disparate companies and products. I know some people think that Web 2.0 actually means social networking—but they're wrong. Even if you're convinced that it does, what would Web 3.0 be? Social networking that makes tons of money? But I digress.

Turning off the cash tap

Very likely, McNamee was talking less about the viability of so-called Web 2.0 enterprises than about the fact that Web start-ups are struggling for profitability and new infusions of cash. Venture capital firms, which typically love Web start-ups, are laying people off and making fewer and fewer bets. Web 2.0 businesses that have managed to skate along for years on word of

People who say things like “Web 2.0 is doomed” do not, in fact, understand the Internet at all.

mouth and lots of eyeballs but virtually no business model and precious little revenue are clearly at risk. Sites have shut down. Certainly, more will.

The Web 2.0 fallacy

Let's be clear: Web 2.0 is not doomed. Web 2.0 does not exist.

People who say things like “Web 2.0 is doomed” do not, in fact, understand the Internet at all. They see it as some sort of exotic bird (say, a peacock) that unexpectedly showed up on the streets of New York. Thing is, the Internet is no peacock. It's an intrinsic part of our lives. Look at the recently passed economic stimulus package. Millions of dollars are being allocated to broadband expansion. We do everything online: Shop, bank, make and receive calls, watch movies, send photos, view photos, chat, cry, shout, work, make deals, plan, govern, and more.

Yet people keep making ridiculous statements, like saying that Web 2.0 is doomed. It's more than an annoyance, since there are still people who are not entirely comfortable with the online world. These folks may even take solace in such claims, thinking that the Web could just evaporate and their lives would be simple once more.

Think of the Internet as being like any other revolution over past decades and even centuries. We've gone through different ages—iron, industrial, information—all of which represented major shifts in societal

progress. But when you look at the major innovations over time, there are no version numbers attached to them. Television, for example, arrived in the late 1930s, and over the course of the next few decades it was called, well, television. When color came along, it was called color television or—big surprise—television. It wasn't television 2.0.

The numbers game

This fascination with version numbers can actually be blamed on the Technology Revolution. Software, in particular, is all about version numbers. Each version is typically quite different from another, so you need those numerical identifiers to differentiate. Recently, people started calling the integration of television and the Internet TV 2.0. We here at PCMag are guilty of it, too. But I hate this. It's just TV, or interactive TV.

Microsoft actually tried to sidestep this issue when it followed up Windows 98 with XP and then Vista. Interestingly, the company went back to using numbers for what will likely be its most successful OS in a while: Windows 7.

The Web, or Internet, is not a piece of software. Web 2.0 is an old, tired label that should be retired—but not in favor of Web 2.5, Web 3.0, or even Next-Gen Web. Just call it what it is—the Web or Internet.

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FeedBack

A Request from Across the World

Good day to you. I am from the Philippines. I have a very old issue of *PC Magazine*, I believe from 2003. It is missing its cover and many pages are torn out. Previously, I was computer illiterate, but because of your magazine, I was able to learn some basics. I can troubleshoot my PC, and I installed anti-virus software. I also know how to connect some hardware, all because of this old issue I found. Thanks!—*Simon Dominguez, Roxas City, The Philippines*

They Don't Code Them Like That Anymore

In regard to John C. Dvorak's column "The Death of the App," when it comes to innovation, when was the last time a UI for an OS saw any innovation? Like Dvorak, I have been in the industry since the seventies, and since about 1990 we have seen nothing in terms of innovative apps or operating systems. Look at the Mac UI: It is essentially the same as it was on the Lisa. And Windows is just as bad. But I point to Apple because its closed system has stunted the growth of any creativity that might have come out of its user base.

File formats are a perfect example of a

copyright/patent being used to prevent competition. Word processor file formats were a hugely debated topic way back when—and are part of why things are the way they are. In fact, Ami Pro is one app in particular that was scarfed up by IBM and was actually the best and first "from the ground up" Windows word processor. Back then, MS Word paled in comparison.

But to my mind, the worst assimilation was when Microsoft bought Fox Software and killed FoxPro. Yeah, FoxPro still exists, but it has never been the same since. FoxPro was in competition with Clipper, dBase, and Microsoft's own Access, as well as potentially evolving to threaten SQL Server. So Microsoft just bought it out. Company assimilation, combined with the modern, "quarterly report" way corporations are run today, is the root cause of the lack of innovation we see in the application world.

—*Grumpy3b*

The Touch-Screen Generation

In response to Sascha Segan's insightful column "Why I Hate Touch Screens" (February, page 26), I just want to mention some elements that I feel contribute to the dilemma.

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Input methods are generational. We currently have a pencil generation, a keyboard generation, a mouse generation, a trackpad generation, a stylus generation, and—coming online now—a multitouch generation.

No current touch technology is close to the high data fidelity of a hologram, which will appear someday at the consumer level. Until then, each type of touch input has its own learning curve with ardent supporters—who are all unwilling to adapt to the next level. Also, a product of epic importance has to appear to make any new input method practical. Although I think the iPhone is more than a fad, it doesn't rank up there with the pencil or mouse.—*Macdrew*

Don't Trust the Shady Standby

Thanks, Neil Rubenking, for your tip "Remove Standby from Windows XP Shut-down." When Windows first introduced Standby, I thought it was a great idea. That is, until I tried it and found out how buggy it was. That was almost 14 years ago, but I have refused to use Standby since. I recently tried using Hibernate on my laptop, but my system's shut-down and start-up times seemed just as long as if I were to just shut down the computer and start it up fresh. So I think you are correct, Neil. Standby can still be buggy on certain computers. The big problem is there is no way to know which computer, or when.—*Btdog*

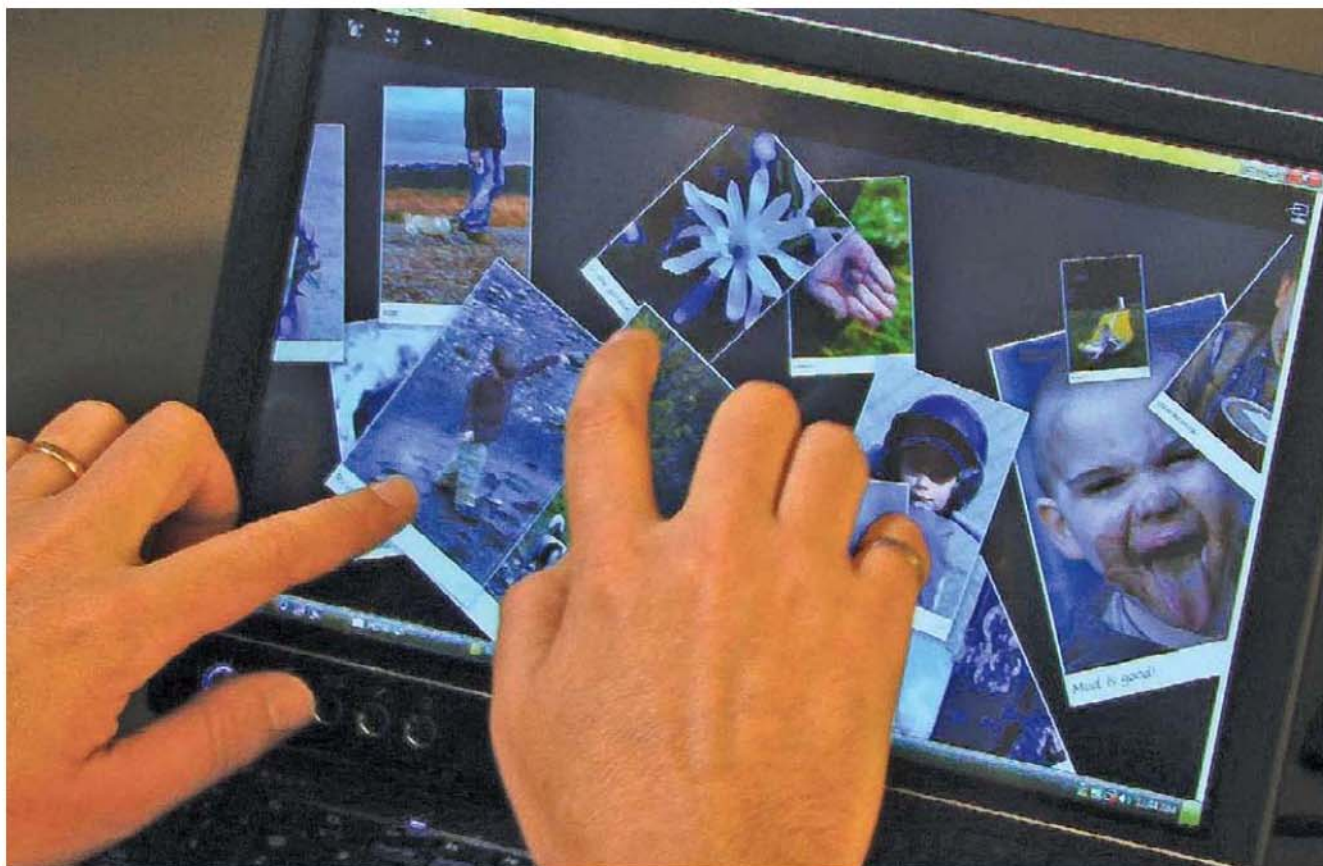
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Touching the Future

Microsoft gets tactile by introducing new touch features for Windows 7.

With the Apple iPhone, Blackberry Storm, and a few tablet PCs, the vision of truly responsive touch-screen computing seems to be at hand. Now Microsoft is joining the parade. Starting with the Microsoft Surface, an expensive touch-screen media kiosk designed, at least initially, for use in public

spaces, Microsoft has now detailed its plans for touch capability in Windows 7, according to a lengthy blog post by Microsoft's Touch Team.

"With Windows 7, we have enriched the Windows experience with touch, making touch a first-class way to interact with your

PC alongside the mouse and keyboard,” the Windows Touch Team wrote. “We focused on common activities and refined them.”

The Tech Behind Touch

Touch capability in Windows 7 will bear a resemblance to a thumbwheel mouse: The thumbwheel is used for scrolling, while more context-aware applications give it a specialized purpose, such as adjusting pitch in a flight simulator.

Windows 7 gestures will include tapping and double-tapping, as you might do with a mouse button; dragging; scrolling using the main window as a touch point instead of the scroll bar; pinching (to zoom in and out); two-finger tapping (to zoom and orient on the finger); rotating (by touching two spots and then twisting); flicking (for quick shifts left and right); and pressing-and-holding (to right-click). The Touch Team released an online video demonstrating the technology.

Will Consumers Get on Board?

For Microsoft, touch capability has evolved from a selling point of tablet PCs into a feature that the company is attempting to push



AT YOUR FINGERTIPS The HP TouchSmart desktop is one of the few PCs that can currently run the drivers for Windows 7 touch capability.

into the computing mainstream. But for now, touch computing is still limited, with Microsoft releasing beta drivers for Win 7 touch features in a handful of systems, including the HP TouchSmart IQ500 series and IQ800 series, the HP TouchSmart tx2 Tablet, and the Dell Latitude XT and XT2 tablet. With the full OS release on the way, Microsoft is waiting to see whether consumers will get a feel for touch computing.—Mark Hachman

BEST OF THE INTERNET

NAMECHK

With NameChk, you can find out where your username is still available—and grab it before someone else does. It supports over 70 services, including Facebook, LiveJournal, Twitter, Blogger, eBay, LinkedIn, YouTube, and more.—Alan Henry

CHI.MP

At Chi.mp, you can add all your contacts and social-networking accounts—and take control of your virtual identity. The service lets you configure multiple personas that are visible only to the contacts and groups that you allow.—AH

MYBANKTRACKER

My Bank Tracker, a site with a huge database of bank information and promotions, can help you find the right account at the right bank for you. It tracks hundreds of financial products, from CDs to mortgage loans, across dozens of banks.—AH

Are ISPs on Board with RIAA's New Strategy?

Tech companies deny they will cut off pirating customers.

Remember the RIAA's anti-piracy ads of a few years ago? "You wouldn't steal a wallet..." And who could forget the famous trials of Jammie Thomas and others? Well, it seems that such tactics may be a thing of the past. In December, the music-industry group announced that it was changing strategy by abandoning its practice of suing individuals for online piracy in favor of working with Internet service providers to track down offenders. But ISPs may not be as gung-ho about punishing downloaders. Though the

RIAA stated that people who ignore the warnings could be subject to a slowdown in service or loss of service completely, a number of ISPs have refuted such claims.

Joe Waz, vice president for external affairs and public policy counsel at Comcast, vehemently denied rumors in the press that Comcast was cooperating with the RIAA and even implementing a "three strikes and you're out" policy toward pirating customers. In a blog post Waz wrote, "We have no



ISP STANDS FIRM Comcast's Joe Waz sets the record straight on his company's stance on customers who pirate content.

plans to test or implement a so-called 'three strikes and you're out' policy." AT&T and Cox also denied using such a program. A spokesman for AT&T said, "We are treating this as a customer education and deterrence program. Also, as has been our policy, we never suspend or terminate our customers' service based upon the allegations of a third party."

Also, Google recently cut a deal with music companies to offer free downloads in China. The world's largest Internet market, China is also known as the biggest source

of illegal downloads. According to *The New York Times*, the International Federation of Phonographic Industries estimates that 99 percent of songs downloaded in China violate copyrights. Offering free downloads, which will be supported by ad revenue, is Google's play to compete with Chinese search giant Baidu and give music companies a chance to recoup some of the millions of dollars they say they have lost to piracy. —Chloe Albanesius and Erik Rhey

Gaming's New Universe: More Women, Platforms

2009 GDC focuses on diversification of the gaming industry.

These days, the gaming universe consists of numerous factions, some of which are related, and some of which aren't. Console games and PC games, for example, used to be clearly bifurcated, but now there are multiplatform titles. Such changes and diversification of the gaming industry was reflected at the 2009 Game Developers

Conference in San Francisco. This year's show covered everything from women in gaming to Windows 7.

The Academic Side of Gaming

Now in its fourth year, Games Download, a research group, collects academic data on gaming. Presenters Mia Consalvo and Ian Bogost gave capsule summaries of ten different research papers or book extracts. Perhaps the most interesting of these concerned game spaces—the space on your screen, your immediate physical environment, the social environment (other players), and so on. Mostly, games don't take full advantage of the space outside the screen—but the potential is there.



FIXING QUOTES Jane McGonigal, ARG designer and researcher at the Institute for the Future, at GDC.

Women in Gaming

A panel that included Phaedra Boinodiris, Serious Games product manager at IBM, and Merrilea Mayo, Director of Future Learning Initiatives for the Kauffman Foundation, addressed the issue of women in gaming—on both the player and development sides. Nintendo's efforts to broaden gaming with the

DS handheld and Wii console have brought more women into the fold, with 51 percent of Wii users and 53 percent of DS owners being girls or women.

Gaming with Windows 7

Microsoft held several sessions detailing some of the improvements in Windows 7 for developers and publishers, as well as the release of Games for Windows Live 3.0. Although the service still offers no out-of-game client to receive messages/game invites, it does include three major new features: in-game downloadable content, per-game storage for settings and saves, and new authentication capability.

—Lloyd Case and Jason Cross

BEST OF OUR BLOGS



GEARLOG

Garmin Offers Connected Workout GPS

Fitness buffs might want to get to know the ANT+ system, because Garmin has big plans for it. Though this wireless data system has been around for a while, Garmin is going to build it out like never before. Available in the FR60 watch for \$199, the system is reported to be compatible with Concept2's rowing products, Mad Dogg Athletics, the Spinning program for indoor cycles, and Nautilus' indoor cycles. Besides talking to your gym equipment, ANT+ can wirelessly transfer data to your PC. You can then share your data with a coach or trainer, or just monitor your progress. —*Troy Dreier*

SECURITY WATCH

Adware for Firefox Uncovered

Webroot has uncovered adware that targets the Firefox platform. The malware resembles DNSChanger, a common DNS hijacking threat, but operates differently. Instead of hacking the Registry to change DNS, the new variant throws a DLL into the C:\Program Files\Mozilla Firefox\components directory and therefore runs inside the browser. In order for this to happen, the user has to run a malicious program as Administrator. Like DNSChanger, it intercepts certain operations and redirects them through a Ukrainian host previously used by DNSChanger. Success for the early entries in the Firefox malware market could send a signal for other IE-only players that it's time to go cross-platform.—*Larry Seltzer*

[illegible]

@WORK

ePostMailer Offers Free E-Mail Marketing

Spryka ePostMailer is free bulk e-mail software, a mass e-mail marketing program, and a bulk e-mailing sender. It's intended to facilitate easy and convenient sending of e-mail newsletters to large mailing lists. Its features include the ability to manage multiple e-mail marketing projects, create and deliver customized HTML bulk e-mail, embed images and create layouts to deliver to your bulk e-mail contacts, and more. The free version lets you send bulk e-mail to up to 200 contacts. The Professional version, \$49.95, lets you send unlimited e-mails.—*Kathy Yakal*

APPSCOUT

NASA to Provide Images, Data to Microsoft's World-wide Telescope

NASA recently announced that it will provide Microsoft with more than 100 terabytes of data and images for use with Microsoft's Worldwide Telescope, the software giant's rival to Google Sky. Only the most interesting content will be added to Worldwide Telescope, including high-resolution scientific images and data from Mars and the moon.

NASA's Ames Research Center in Moffett Field, California, will host the data. WorldWide Telescope will incorporate the data later in 2009, Microsoft said, and will feature imagery from NASA's Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter, known as the MRO, plus the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter.—*Mark Hachman*

Connected Traveler

Give Your Data a Safe Trip

These secure hard drives will keep your files from falling into the wrong hands on the road.

We've all heard the horror stories in the press and from our colleagues. All those laptops and portable drives with sensitive company data left at the airport or in a taxi, or—worse—stolen from a hotel room. When you're traveling, keeping your data safe is a top priority. Having a portable drive as a backup to your laptop is a good start. But these days it's just not enough. You also need a layer of security on that drive in case the drive itself is lost or stolen.

To help you in this quest, we've collected our favorites. These drives look stylish, offer high capacity, and employ a variety of security schemes. Our current Editors' Choice



**LENOVO THINKPAD
USB PORTABLE SECURE DRIVE**

encrypted drive, the **Lenovo ThinkPad USB Portable Secure Drive** (320GB, \$219 list; ●●●●●), is the most user-friendly of the bunch. You won't need to install software on your PC or Mac to access the protected data, unlike the other drives here; you just set a code on the numerical keypad on the case, and your data is protected inside and out. The drive is secure enough to earn the government's "Secret" classification, and it's compatible with Macs and Linux-based systems as well as PCs. Sure, it costs a bit more



MAXTOR BLACKARMOR

compared with your average external drive, but an extra 20 cents per gigabyte shouldn't be too much to keep your data safe.

If you're more interested in a software-based solution, both the **Maxtor BlackArmor** (160GB, \$120 list; ●●●●○) and **Buffalo MiniStation DataVault** (160GB, \$129 direct; ●●●●○) offer 128-bit AES encryption. The easy-to-use BlackArmor comes with encryption software, but it's secure right out of the box; all you need to keep your data safe is a password, though if you ever need to change the password, you'll have to load the software onto your Windows system. It's far more reasonably priced than the Lenovo, too.

The DataVault is a bit more flexible, loading software for both Macs and Windows

BUFFALO MINISTATION DATAVAULT



ABS-SECURE ENCRYPTED BACKUP SOLUTION

PCs. It comes in a bulkier case, which allows room for a slew of antishock bumpers and enough float space to protect the drive in a significant fall. Add a three-year warranty to those rugged features and you have a lasting security solution in the DataVault.

Unless you're at the highest levels of government, 128-bit AES encryption should be all the security you'll need. But if your job entails "Top Secret" information, or you just want an absolutely hack-proof drive, you'll find few consumer backup devices more secure than the **ABS-Secure Encrypted Backup Solution** (160GB, \$180 list; ●●●○). This ruggedized external drive boasts 256-bit AES security and Windows-only secure reader software, which is required for accessing your data once it's loaded on the drive. You'll certainly pay a premium—and jump through the hoops of a complicated setup—for this ultra-secure drive, but you won't get protection like this anywhere else.—*Nicole Price Fasig*

INSIDE

- 14 HARDWARE
- 20 BUSINESS
- 25 CONSUMER ELECTRONICS
- 32 SOFTWARE

First

Apple iMac (Nvidia GeForce 9400M)

More iMac for Your Money



The all-in-one desktop market that Apple pioneered has been dominated by the iMac. Although technically there were “all-in-ones” long before the iMac, none has survived as long. And with the latest iMac (with Nvidia GeForce 9400M graphics), that history of dominance is not likely to come to an end any time soon.

On the outside, the new iMac looks much like the older iMac 24-inch. There's the brilliant 1,920-by-1,200 widescreen LCD, the aluminum, glass, and plastic case, and a slightly smaller keyboard. Inside the case are some notable improvements over last year's models. For example, the addition of the Nvidia 9400M chipset makes the new iMac fully DX10-compatible, so it can run the latest 3D games and apps as well as supporting DDR3 memory. This iteration has also bumped up

the standard memory to 4GB (from 1GB) and the hard drive from 320GB to 640GB.

The iMac performed pretty well on many of our benchmark tests. It finished the Photoshop CS4 test in a spritely 1:46 running 64-bit Vista. On PCMark Vantage (which measures the ability to perform day-to-day tasks such as multimedia, Web browsing, and more), the iMac scored 4,246—notable because it's a significantly higher score than that of the quad-core Cybernet iOne-GX31 (3,919). The iMac's less-impressive scores on 3D tests indicate that although this system is very good at multimedia/content creation, it's less effective at 3D gaming. Greenies will be happy to hear that this model received EPEAT Gold certification.

For these reasons, this iMac wrests back its Editors' Choice from the Sony VAIO VGC-JS130J/P.—*Joel Santo Domingo*

[>>CLICK HERE FOR MORE](#)

SPECS 2.66-GHz Intel Core 2 Duo E8135 processor, 4GB 1.06-GHz DDR3 SDRAM, 640GB 7,200-rpm SATA hard drive, 256MB Nvidia GeForce 9400M integrated graphics, dual-layer DVD±RW drive, integrated 24-inch widescreen LCD monitor, four USB 2.0 ports, one FireWire 800 port, integrated stereo speakers, Mac OS X 10.5.

Looks

OUR RATINGS KEY:

- EXCELLENT
- VERY GOOD
- GOOD
- FAIR
- POOR

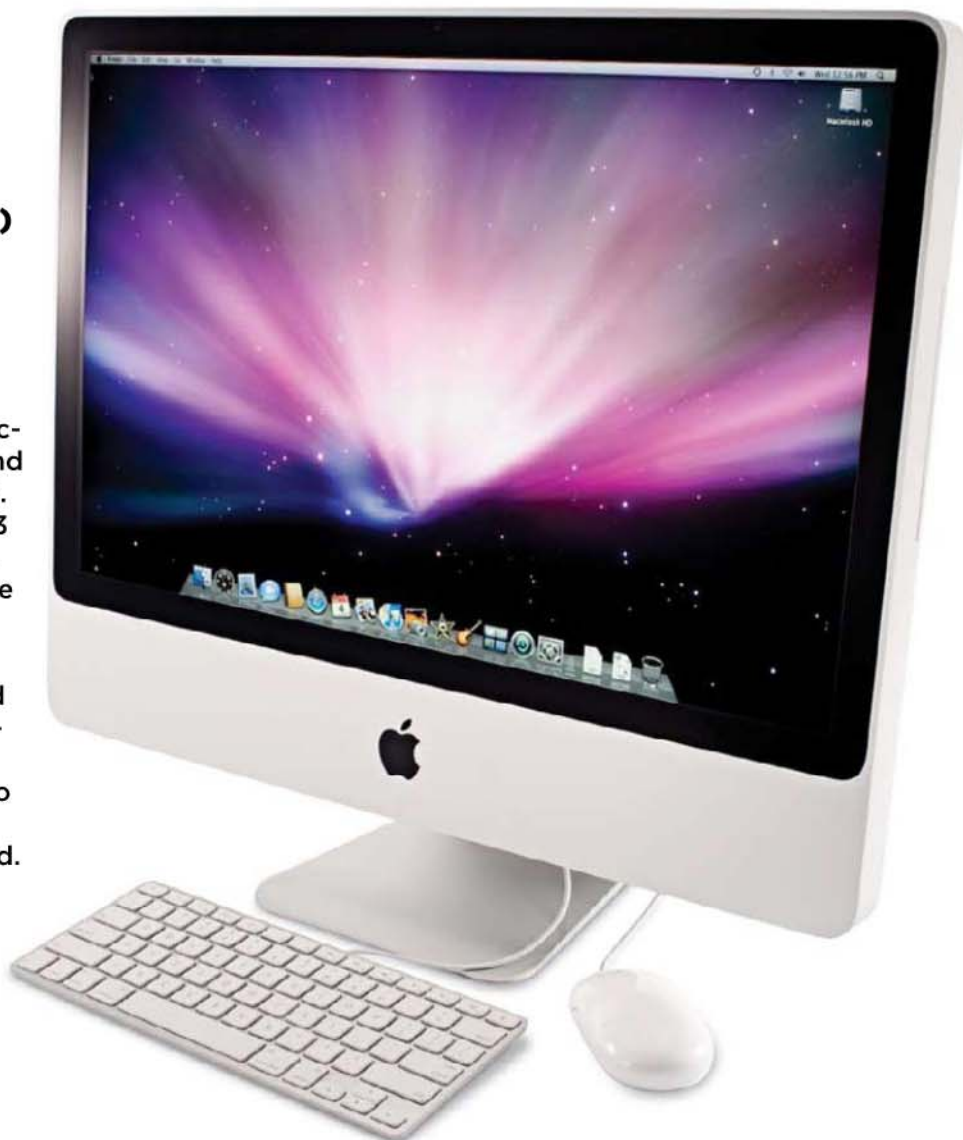
Apple iMac (Nvidia GeForce 9400M)

\$1,499 list



PROS Both Windows- and Mac-compatible. Fully HD-capable screen. Recyclable aluminum-and-glass construction. EPEAT Gold certified and Energy Star 5.0 pre-certified. Minimal cables. 4GB of DDR3 RAM standard. No crapware. iLife '09 included. Same price as old 20-inch model.

CONS No media card slots. Mighty Mouse is slippery and annoying. Vista 64-bit installation is complicated. No Blu-ray option. No eSATA. No numeric keypad and cursor control on standard keyboard. Only 90 days of phone tech support.



PERFORMANCE TESTS

▲ High scores are best. ▼ Low scores are best.
Bold type denotes first place.

	PCMARK VANTAGE* ▲	3D 3DMARK VANTAGE* ▲	MULTIMEDIA CINEBENCH R10 ▲	WINDOWS MEDIA ENCODER ▼ min:sec	PHOTOSHOP CS4 ▼ min:sec
Apple iMac (Nvidia GeForce 9400M)	4,246	3,506	6,261	1:00	1:46
Apple iMac (24-inch Penryn, 3.06 GHz) (2008)	4,448	9,154	6,362	1:10	2:16
Cybernet iOne-GX31	3,919	N/A	9,264	0:44	1:57
Sony VAIO VGC-JS130J/P	3,546	N/A	5,510	1:13	N/A

RED denotes Editors' Choice. N/A—Not applicable: The product could not perform this test, or the test was not compatible. * The tests were set to 1,024-by-768 resolution.



Clickfree HD325

Dead Simple Backup



The Clickfree HD325 is a backup drive that is as simple to use as possible, and will save your documents before the eventual crash of your computer's hard drive. It can also save your bacon during more common occurrences like deleting or writing over important files. Simply put: Go out and get one of these drives. It's that good.

The 320GB HD325 looks just like your run-of-the-mill external portable hard drive. The included USB cable is a Y-shaped one, with an extra USB lead for systems that may require additional power to run the drive. The HD325 is compatible with 32- and 64-bit versions of Windows 2000, XP, and Vista, and you can also use it with Mac OS 10.5.

When you plug in the drive, it automatically starts looking for, then backing up, your documents, including Office files (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and the like), as well as music, videos, photos, e-mail, and Internet bookmarks. The Clickfree doesn't back up your system files and applications, so you'll need something "stronger" if you want to be up and running after a complete hard drive crash. Subsequent backups are quicker, since it copies only the files that are new or have changed. The first test backup took about 10 to 15 minutes, and subsequent ones took 5 minutes. Tests performed on Mac systems yielded about the same results.



Clickfree HD325

320GB, \$180 list



PROS Simple plug-and-play backup. Works with multiple PCs or Macs. Works with 32-bit and 64-bit versions of Windows 2000, XP, and Vista. No install needed.

CONS Must reformat to switch between Macs and PCs. Requires OS 10.5 or later on Macs.

Basically, there's no easier method of computer backup currently available on the market. That is the primary reason why the Clickfree HD325 earns our Editors' Choice for portable backup solutions.

—Joel Santo Domingo

[>>CLICK HERE FOR MORE](#)

Dell Studio XPS 435

A Power User's Dream Desktop



The XPS 435 veers decidedly away from the black-and-silver boxes of the previous XPS and Inspiron models. Along with the fresh exterior, the 435 has a new Core i7-powered interior. If you're the type who was tempted by the Dell XPS 730x but was put off by the almost \$4,000 price, you should take a closer look at the 435.

A full-size ATX tower houses the 435. The system is tilted back somewhat so you can easily reach buttons, ports, and slots when the tower is on the floor under your desk. This system's quad-core processor, 6GB of DDR3 SDRAM, and 1GB ATI Radeon HD 4870 graphics card make it a capable choice for both multimedia and 3D gaming. Although there's lots of room inside for upgrades, the 435's motherboard supports only one graphics card.

The 435's beefy components did not disappoint on our benchmark tests. Both Crysis and World in Conflict were very playable at 1,280-by-1,024 resolution (scores were 60 and 78 frames per second, respectively). Multimedia performance was also speedy: Scores on the Windows Media Encoder and



Dell Studio XPS 435

\$1,769 direct; \$1,999 with 22-inch widescreen monitor



PROS High-powered CPU and graphics. Forward-thinking design. Top-mounted tray and USB ports. A 15-month subscription to McAfee Internet Security.

CONS Big and heavy. Could use another data drive. No hard switch for reset or power. Blu-ray is read-only.

Photoshop CS4 tests were 36 seconds and 1:12. In price and hardware, the 435 occupies the middle ground between the more mainstream (and sub-\$1,000) Studio XPS and Dell's \$4,000 XPS 730x and XPS 730x H2C models. In the price-to-performance ratio, it's a great value.—*Joel Santo Domingo*

[>>CLICK HERE FOR MORE](#)

SPECS 2.66-GHz Intel Core i7-920 processor, 6GB 1-GHz DDR2 SDRAM, two 500GB 7,200-rpm SATA hard drives in a RAID 0 array, 1GB ATI Radeon HD 4870 graphics card, Blu-ray (BD-ROM / DVD3RW) combo drive, 22-inch wide-screen LCD monitor, eight USB 2.0 ports, one FireWire port, one eSATA port, Windows Vista Home Premium 64-bit.

DESKTOPS			LAPTOPS
			
Acer Aspire X1700-U3700A \$480 list 	Apple Mac mini (Nvidia GeForce 9400M) \$799 list 	HP Pavilion Elite m9550f \$1,199 list 	Apple MacBook Pro 17-inch (Unibody) \$2,799 direct
PROS • Compact form factor • Some DX10 3D capabilities • More powerful than net-tops and budget PCs • HDMI port	• Compact • Energy efficient • Quiet • Wireless 802.11a/b/g/n and Bluetooth built in • Comes with iLife '09	• Media hard drive bays • Tray on top of case for MP3 player, digital camera, or external hard drive	• 40 percent bigger battery • Unibody enclosure • Lightest in its class • Glass screen • Dual graphics chipsets • DDR3 memory
CONS • Single-digit 3D scores • No Blu-ray • Limited expansion • Crapware • No Wi-Fi	• No Blu-ray option • No keyboard or mouse included • 30-inch LCD support requires optional DVI adapter	• Only 60-day Norton Internet Security subscription • Lots of crapware • Messy internal wiring • Same price as m9400t, with many fewer features	• Hard drive smaller than competitors' • No memory card reader • No Blu-ray drive
BOTTOM LINE The X1700-U3700A is a decent PC for the den or home office, with enough power for moderate multi-media tasks.	The mini's new internals bring it up to the level of the MacBook, and make it a better alternative for many users.	The m9550f update has a little more power yet fewer features than its predecessor.	Doubts about the new keyboard, touchpad, and non-removable battery can be put to rest, because the Unibody MacBook Pro is as powerful as it is gorgeous.
SPECS 2.4-GHz Intel Pentium Dual Core E2220 processor; 4GB 800-MHz DDR2 SDRAM; 640GB 7,200-rpm SATA hard drive; 512MB Nvidia GeForce G100 graphics; dual-layer DVD±RW; Vista Home Premium 64-bit.	2.0-GHz Intel Core 2 Duo P7350 processor; 2GB 1,066-MHz DDR3 SDRAM; 320GB SATA hard drive; 256MB Nvidia GeForce 9400M integrated graphics; dual-layer DVD±RW drive; Mac OS 10.5.	2.5-GHz Intel Core 2 Quad Q9300 processor; 8GB 800-MHz DDR2 SDRAM; 1TB, 7,200-rpm SATA hard drive; 512MB ATI Radeon HD 4850 graphics card; dual-layer DVD±RW drive; Vista Home Premium 64-bit.	2.66-GHz Intel Core 2 Duo T9550; 4,096MB DDR3 SDRAM; 320GB hard drive; Nvidia GeForce 9600M GT and GeForce 9400M GT graphics; 17-inch screen; 6.6 pounds; 95-Wh battery; Mac OS 10.5.6.
RED indicates Editors' Choice.			

		PRINTERS	STORAGE
			
Lenovo IdeaPad Y650 \$1,299 direct	Toshiba Qosmio X305-Q725 \$2,699.99 direct	Epson WorkForce 600 \$199.99 direct	ABS-Secure Encrypted Backup Solution (160GB) \$180 list
● ● ● ● ○	● ● ● ● ○	● ● ● ● ○	● ● ● ● ○
• As light as the 15-inch MacBook Pro • Tastefully designed • Fast and energy-efficient processor • HDMI and eSATA ports	• Intel quad-core processor • Nvidia 9800M GTX graphics card • Hard and solid-state drive • Fiery design • Excellent gaming scores	• Fast • Wired and wireless network support • Prints and scans over a network • Standalone fax and copier	• High-end 256-bit AES encryption • Permanently attached USB cable • Ruggedized
• Only two USB ports • Multitouch feature gets in the way of navigating • Needs higher resolutions • Low-powered battery and no option to trade up	• Resolution should have been higher at this price point • Could've fit a bigger battery	• Subpar text quality • Paper capacity is only 100 sheets • Can't fax directly from a PC	• Complicated install process • Windows only • Lacks disaster recovery utility • Pricey per GB
The IdeaPad Y650 is the lightest 16-inch media center around. Its somewhat high price tag, however, isn't justified by its parts.	The X305-Q725's flamboyant design may not appeal to everyone, but its quad-core processor and Nvidia GTX graphics card are parts that extreme gamers yearn for.	The WorkForce 600 is fast but has limitations (notably low paper capacity). Although an attractive choice, it falls just short of being a slam-dunk winner.	Mainly aimed at security geeks and the paranoid, this almost-bulletproof secure backup solution exacts a price for its high level of security.
2.4-GHz Intel Core 2 Duo P8600; 3GB DDR3 SDRAM; 320GB hard drive; Intel GMA 4500MHD graphics; 16-inch widescreen; 5.5 pounds; 42-Wh battery; Vista Home Premium 32-bit.	2.0-GHz Intel Core 2 Quad Q9000; 4GB DDR3 SDRAM; 320GB hard drive and 64GB SSD drive; Nvidia GeForce 9800M GTX graphics; 17-inch widescreen; 9.2 pounds; 58-Wh battery; Vista Ultimate 64-bit.	All-in-one inkjet; USB, Ethernet, and Wi-Fi connections; four colors; 11-in-1 memory card slot; flatbed scanner, copier, and fax capability; 12 by 18.2 by 22.1 inches (HWD); 18.3 pounds.	160GB; USB 2.0; 5,400 rpm; FireWire 800, USB, and SATA connections; 5 by 3 by 1.1 inches (HWD); 7 ounces.

Visit pcmag.com for the full reviews of these and other hardware products.



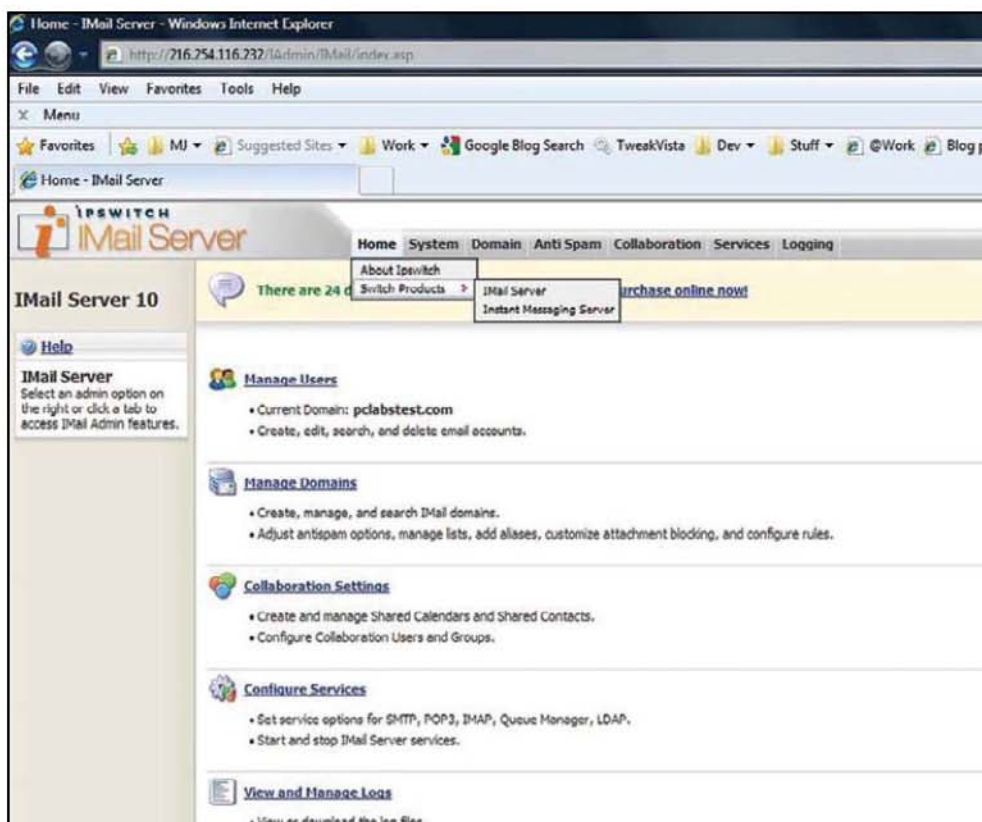
IMail Server Premium Version 10

\$1,195 direct for 25 users



PROS Easy wizard-driven installation, configuration. Web-ready server. Comprehensive antispam features.

CONS Documentation could use more examples. Logs and the e-mail queue records should provide more information about messages.



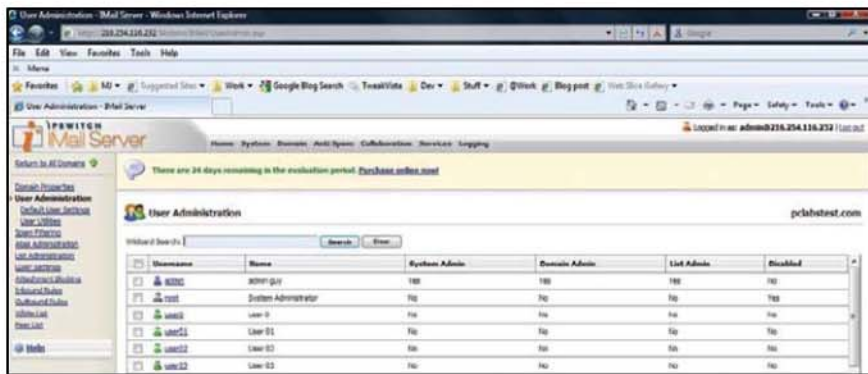
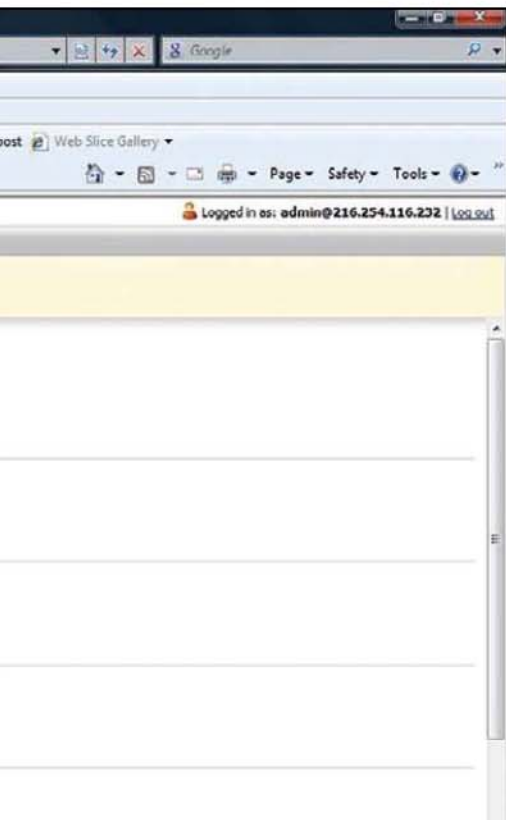
IMail Server Premium Version 10

Powerful, Simple, Cheap E-Mail Server



For small businesses looking to run their e-mail system in-house, Ipswitch's IMail Server is a gem. Licensing for Microsoft Exchange and even Yahoo's Zimbra can run into the tens of thousands of dollars. By comparison, IMail Premium is a bargain. For \$1,195 (for 25 users) you also get an instant-messaging server, premium antispam protection, shared Outlook calendaring, and Ipswitch support.

End users should like it, too, because the included IMail Web client is full-featured. It comes with an address book and supports personal folders, signatures, auto responders, and vacation messages. While it's not as robust as Microsoft's Outlook client, it's just as easy to use as Gmail and Yahoo Mail. The client has a rules-based filter that can redirect messages to folders or mark them for deletion, just like the one in Outlook. The Web client has all of the basic features you'd



TRUE E-MAIL CONTROL IMail Server's management interface is clear and easy to navigate, with options for configuring users, domains, and logs. You can also set and manage administrators.

expect from an e-mail client, but it's not the only client you can use. For those who simply can't live without the Office interface, not to worry: I tested IMail with Outlook and it works perfectly well.

After you install IMail, all its features can be turned on and off without having to connect any external components. The server modules are completely integrated with the Web, and the features are available in the online interface—great news for the less technically inclined.

In testing, I had some trouble sending outbound messages until I changed the Windows Server 2008 firewall profile settings. Inbound messages took longer to get working, but that was because I needed to

wait for the host provider to propagate the record that matched my domain name with my IP address. Also, I found the logs a bit cryptic, especially for novice administrators. You need to dig into the help files and into Ipswitch's knowledge base to understand what's going on. It's a shame that Ipswitch did so much work on making setup and config easy and then skimped on the logs. On the plus side, IMail has one of the most comprehensive collections of antispam filters I've seen on an e-mail server.

Ipswitch strikes a good balance between functionality and complexity and is therefore an excellent choice for a small-to-midsized business.—*Mario Morejon*

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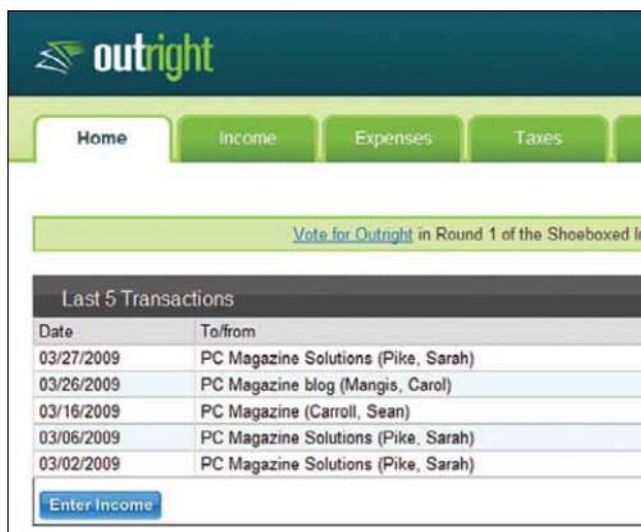
Outright.com

Free Accounting for Small Businesses

Most very small businesses have no need for full-blown accounting software. They simply want to track income and expenses, meet their tax obligations, and see how they're doing. For those tasks, some turn to Microsoft Office or even just paper and pencil. But the free service at Outright.com is a simple, more elegant solution. Though this site is young and still a bit green (lacking features like invoicing, credit card payments, and check writing), it still succeeds to a surprising degree. And it's a pleasure to use.

Outright.com tracks income and expenses, helps you estimate your taxes, and produces reports. The opening screen shows five tabs—Home, Income, Expenses, Taxes, and Reports. Clicking on the first produces a page listing your last five transactions and your profit and loss by month, quarter, and year to date. Outright.com can also connect with other online services, such as FreshBooks, Shoeboxed, and oDesk.

The simple reports Outright.com can produce include Profit & Loss, Income by Customer, Expenses by Vendor, and 1099 (the service lets you track payments to contractors). You can drill down on line items, and



Outright.com

Free



PROS Free. Simple. Slick, clean interface. Integrates with related applications. Estimates income taxes due.

CONS No state taxes yet. No export to tax programs. Can't manually enter invoices created elsewhere. Needs to add more partner services. Can't modify categories.

export report data and transactions to CSV format. At this early stage, I recommend Outright.com for microbusinesses that don't use invoices or that want to use FreshBooks for invoices. Until Outright fills out its feature set, SimpleStart, the free online service from QuickBooks, offers more bang for no bucks.—Kathy Yaka

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Xerox Phaser 6180MFP/N

A Color Laser That Does It All

This multifunction version of the Editors' Choice Xerox Phaser 6180/N printer starts out with the best possible credentials. And indeed, when it comes to printing, the 6180MFP/N delivers on its promise, with print speed and paper handling suitable for relatively heavy-duty printing in a small office. It stumbles a bit over other functions, notably faxing and scanning, but its impressive printing skills largely make up for those shortcomings.

Even for a laser, this is a big, heavy printer. It measures 28.7 by 18.1 by 22.4 inches (HWD) and weighs 88.2 pounds—much too large to fit comfortably on a desk. The 6180MFP can print, scan, and fax over a network and work as a standalone copier, fax machine, and e-mail sender, complete with a 50-page automatic document feeder (ADF) for multipage documents. Its standard paper capacity is 400 sheets, divided into a 250-sheet drawer and a 150-sheet tray.

Xerox rates the 6180MFP/N's engine at 31 pages per minute for monochrome and 20 ppm for color—which is slightly faster for color than the 6180/N. On our tests, this printer turned in an admirable total time of 9 minutes 46 seconds on our business applications suite, shaving about a half minute



Xerox Phaser 6180MFP/N

\$999 direct



PROS Fast. High-quality text. Reasonably high-quality graphics. Good paper handling.

CONS Scanning over a network is harder to set up than it should be. Fax-from-PC feature is hidden in the driver.

off the 6180/N's time. More important, this is the fastest time I've seen yet for a color laser AIO in this class. And it scored well on output quality, with superior text and graphics on a par with its competitors. The fax-from-PC and network scanning features are tricky to use, but the 6180MFP/N is impressive overall, and a good fit for most small offices and workgroups.—*M. David Stone*

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Acer H233H bmid

\$229.99 list



PROS Reasonably priced.
Good color quality.
High-resolution panel.

CONS Limited adjustability.
Average grayscale
performance.

**Acer H233H bmid**

A Midsize HD Display with Value

Looking to move up to a high-resolution display that will handle HD video but you're not prepared to drop \$400 or more for a 24-inch model? The H233H is an affordable solution. This 23-inch panel displays high-definition video in native 16:9 aspect ratio and offers very good color quality and text readability. It's not without its flaws, however, with its mediocre grayscale performance and limited feature set detracting from an otherwise solid offering.

The 1,900-by-1,080 panel sits in a black cabinet and is framed by a glossy black bezel with rounded edges. The Input control toggles among VGA, DVI, and HDMI, and the Menu control activates the on-screen display (OSD) system. Once inside the OSD,

you can adjust color temperature, brightness, and contrast levels and enable Acer's Adaptive Contrast Management (ACM) feature, which boosts the contrast ratio from 1,000:1 (static) to 40,000:1 (dynamic).

The H233H performed admirably on most of the DisplayMate diagnostic tests. Colors were vivid and ramped evenly from dark to light, with no evidence of tinting or compression. But the panel had some trouble displaying the two darkest and two lightest swatches on the 64-Step Grayscale test. This display's 5-millisecond pixel response rate means good performance for games and fast-moving HD video. For those who want a smaller, inexpensive HD display, the H233H is an ideal choice.—*John R. Delaney*

[>>CLICK HERE FOR MORE](#)

Sharp Aquos LC-52D85U

\$2,099.99 direct



PROS Solid value. Energy efficient.
Five HDMI ports.

CONS Picture contrast lags behind
that of some competing brands.
No multimedia features.

Sharp Aquos LC-52D85U

Sharp's Big-Screen Bargain



Getting a sweet deal on a solid product is always a good thing, especially in an economy like this one. The 52-inch Aquos LC-52D85U is one of the least expensive LCD HDTVs you can get that features detail-enhancing 190-Hz display technology. What's more, the set earns high marks for energy efficiency and sports a slew of video connections. Although the set lacks the integrated multimedia capabilities of other manufacturers' more-expensive models, its low price and good picture performance make it a compelling deal.

The beveled, brush-finished perimeter of the LC-52D85U's otherwise glossy, dark-colored frame is highly reflective and gives the set a unique appearance. The on-display controls are easy to access and operate, and

the universal remote is the standard Sharp baton design with a backlit keypad. Video inputs include five HDMI (one on the side), two component video connections, VGA, RF input, and an RS-232C serial port for home-theater systems.

On my tests, the set's average contrast result of 1,085:1 was more than adequate under typical room lighting. Grayscale response was initially bluish-green until I calibrated the picture, which improved overall color accuracy. This HDTV also scores points for energy efficiency, with an estimated operating cost of \$4.08 per month (206-watt average). Overall, the LC-52D85U gives you a big screen, solid performance, lots of ports, and excellent energy savings at a reasonable price, thus meriting our Editors' Choice in this category. —Robert Heron

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Apple iPod shuffle (3rd generation)

Apple Takes the Shuffle Off Repeat

Apple's latest iPod shuffle sells for 20 bucks less than its feature-barren predecessor—and sports a laudable 4GB in its practically minuscule frame. The tiny player has learned some new tricks, most notably the ability to “talk” to you in a charming robotic voice, using a new feature called VoiceOver that identifies songs at the press of a button and informs you when your battery is low. Alas, this player has drawbacks: The playback controls are absent from the player itself (they're relegated to the earbud cord), and, in true shuffle fashion, there's still no screen or FM radio. For some people, the price, storage space, and slick, minimal design might compensate for the shuffle's many shortcomings, but SanDisk's Sansa Clip is a better deal.

Measuring 1.8 by 0.7 by 0.3 inches (HWD) and weighing merely 0.38 ounce, this Lilliputian player looks a bit like a USB thumb drive, but even smaller and thinner. A switch on the top panel toggles among Shuffle, Play in Order, or Power Off. The earphone jack sits right next to the switch, and a shiny metallic shirt clip runs along the length of

the back panel. That's all there is—talk about minimalist. The earbuds house the controls that the player itself lacks, so ditching the buds, at least for now, is not a possibility. (However, Apple reps assured me that several third-party manufacturers will soon be creating earphones with integrated shuffle controls, as well as adapters.) So buying a new shuffle today means accepting Apple's earbuds—for now. And because the buttons are built into the cable (close to your right ear) they're hard to see without craning your neck back.

A welcome addition is the ability to load your playlists. VoiceOver will even try to pronounce your playlist's title for you—its success at this task is mixed, but it does know 14 languages. Another cool VoiceOver feature is that when your shuffle's battery life dips to 50 percent, 25 percent, or is about to give out, the handy robot voice will tell you so—a thoughtful inclusion.

Although Apple has no equal when it comes to style, shuffle fans should also consider the Sansa Clip for the same price, which includes 4GB, an FM tuner with 20 presets, and a built-in mic.—*Tim Gideon*

[>>CLICK HERE FOR MORE](#)



A toggle button at the top of the shuffle is for Shuffle, Play in Order, and Power Off

The puny 0.38-ounce shuffle is even smaller than most USB thumb drives

Apple iPod shuffle (3rd generation)

\$79 direct



PROS Revamped, more compact design. Nice price for 4GB capacity. Adds support for playlists. VoiceOver feature announces song titles, informs you when the battery needs recharging.

CONS Controls built into low-quality earbuds. No display. No FM tuner. Bundled USB cable is too short.



Shure SE115

Budget-Friendly, with Big Bass

With its new, bass-heavy SE115, Shure breaks its long tradition of favoring flat response. Don't get me wrong: This isn't a booming pair of earphones, but it delivers far more low-end power than previous Shure models in this price range—and it passively reduces ambient noise, too. The SE115's sonic performance—especially with mid-high frequencies— isn't mind-blowing, but for \$100, it's a very strong option.

Available in black, blue, pink, or red, the 1.1-ounce SE115 set feels light when worn properly. (That means turning each earpiece upside-down and looping the cable over and behind each ear.) Shure has boosted the bass (and, in certain ranges, the treble) to make popular music shine on the SE115, without spiking the low end so much as to throw everything off balance. Acoustic tunes are still pleasant to listen to, but the enhanced bass response makes rap, electronic music, and rock more exciting than it has been on Shure's lower-tier earphones. One caveat: The high-frequency response, particularly around 2 kHz and 4 kHz, can seem too intense, even harsh, on guitars and vocals.

Our HEAD Acoustics frequency-response tests show some surprising power in the



Shure SE115

\$99.99 list



PROS Strong overall performance for the price. Solid bass response. Secure fit.

CONS Boosted bass and treble may disappoint audiophiles. Some potential harshness in the mid-high frequencies.

low frequencies, matching that of the \$1,150 Ultimate Ears UE 11 Pro. So if you want to upgrade your standard-issue MP3-player earbuds, Shure's SE115 is a solid choice. It will vastly improve the quality of your audio and help give the bass in your music a little more presence and definition.—*Tim Gideon*

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Motorola i335 (Boost Mobile)

Clear, Unlimited Calls for \$50 a Month

For folks who like to talk, the combination of the affordable Motorola i335 and Boost Mobile's new \$50-per-month unlimited call plan is a terrific deal. The i335, available for both Boost Mobile and Sprint subscribers, is a simple, almost-perfect voice phone that makes clear calls its top priority.

The 3.7-ounce i335 is a slim, stylish, and semi-rugged candy bar-style phone that measures 4.7 by 1.8 by 0.5 inches (HWD). Although this phone isn't waterproof and won't withstand serious damage, it's still fairly durable. You also get bumpy, red-backlit keys that are not fully separated and a 130-by-130-pixel color LCD. Volume controls, a push-to-talk button, the 2.5mm headphone jack, and a convenient mini USB charging port all reside on the sides of the phone.

On my tests, calls sounded sharp, though there was a slight background hiss. The speakerphone, which is also used for Boost/Nextel walkie-talkie calls, was loud and very clear, as were ringtones. I managed nearly 5 hours of talk time on a battery life test, which isn't bad. Beyond chatting, the i335 can send and receive text messages as well as picture messages—no video. Also, there's



Motorola i335 (Boost Mobile)

\$59.99 list



PROS Inexpensive. Extremely loud. Sharp voice quality. Durable.

CONS Outdated user interface. Slight hiss behind calls.

no camera, memory card slot, or media player, and the Nextel user interface feels dated. But if you're looking for a very simple voice phone for Boost's \$50-per-month calling plan, look no further.—*Sascha Segan*

[>>CLICK HERE FOR MORE](#)



	SMARTPHONES	MOBILE DEVICES		SPEAKERS
				
	Palm Treo Pro (Sprint) \$199.99 direct	T-Mobile webConnect USB Laptop Stick \$49.99 to \$249.99 list	Verizon Hub \$199.99 to \$269 direct	Focal XS \$599 list
	● ● ● ● ● ○	● ● ● ● ● ○	● ● ● ● ● ○	● ● ● ● ● ○
PROS	• Good voice quality • Responsive UI • Smooth video playback	• Future-proof, with advanced technologies	• Elegant interface • Visual voice mail • Doubles as a digital photo frame	• Top-notch audio • Powerful, yet restrained subwoofer • Superb design • Includes an integrated iPod dock
CONS	• Mediocre reception • Poor battery life • Could use more RAM and a better Web browser • Camera lacks some basic features	• T-Mobile's 3G data service is overpriced • Access to Wi-Fi hot spots is not well integrated	• Pricey for what you get • Limited streaming content, Web-connected features • Purchase and use limited to Verizon Wireless	• Wildly expensive • Limited remote control • Buttons on speakers feel a bit flimsy • Uses USB output instead of line-in
BOTTOM LINE	This Treo Pro is a solid, responsive handset for business customers who need Windows Mobile compatibility.	T-Mobile's webConnect is hard to recommend, mostly because T-Mobile simply doesn't offer enough 3G coverage to justify a \$60-per-month subscription fee.	The Verizon Hub is on the right track toward a one-stop home media kiosk, but poor integration, high cost, and a required subscription limit its broad appeal.	The Focal XS delivers sublime 2.1-channel PC sound—for a mere \$600.
SPECS	Windows Mobile Pocket PC; 2.5-inch, 320-by-320 LCD; 2MP camera; 4.5 by 2.4 by 0.5 inches (HWD), 4.7 ounces.	GPRS, EDGE, UMTS, and HSDPA compatible; 3.4 by 1.1 by 0.47 inches (HWD); 1.59 ounces.	Linux OS; 500-MHz processor; 7-inch WVGA LCD (800-by-480); VoIP network enabled; 9 by 12 by 0.5 inches (HWD).	2.1 channel; wireless controls; 30 watts RMS per channel; 12.6 by 3.6 by 5.9 inches (HWD); 2.2 pounds.
RED indicates Editors' Choice				

CAMERAS	GPS	HDTV	INPUT DEVICES
			
Canon PowerShot SD 960IS \$329.99 list ●●●○○	Goodyear GY145 \$199.99 list ●●●●○	Samsung PN50A760 \$2,799.99 list ●●●●○	Canson Papershow \$199.99 list ●●●○○
• Fast • Captures HD video • 16:9 LCD • Long battery life	• Features a 4.3-inch screen at an entry-level price • Text-to-speech conversion • Predictive text entry • Simple menus	• Excellent video processing • Screen optimized for rooms with bright, ambient light • Robust local and network multimedia file support	• Easy to set up and use • Intuitive design • Twenty-foot range
• Pricey • Quality problems at outer edges of images	• No multisegment routing • Includes maps for only the 48 contiguous states • No live traffic updates	• Relatively expensive • Soft-looking picture • Picture contrast is merely average	• Expensive • Paper can be difficult to reuse
The SD960 IS's 16:9 LCD lets you frame your shots to match HDTV and widescreen laptops, but its price and image-quality issues still hold it back.	This Goodyear-branded, entry-level GPS offers a solid navigation experience and a lot of screen for the price, but it lacks many creature comforts.	The PN50A760 is a stylish HDTV with impressive multimedia features, but its picture looks a bit soft when compared with those of less expensive competitors.	The Papershow offers an interesting approach to digital pen-and-paper, but unless you give a lot of presentations, its \$200 price tag makes it a tough sell.
12.1MP; 4X optical zoom; 2.8-inch LCD; 2.1 by 3.9 by 0.9 inches (HWD); 5.1 ounces.	Supports Secure Digital and MultiMediaCard flash memory; 4.3-inch touch-screen display; 5.0 by 3.2 by 0.8 inches (HWD); 6.9 ounces.	50-inch plasma; 1,920-by-1,080 native resolution; 60-Hz refresh rate; 16:9 aspect ratio; component, composite, HDMI, RF, S-Video, and Ethernet connections; 32.9 by 48.8 by 12.4 inches (HWD); 114.6 pounds.	Bluetooth enabled; 150.5mm by 20.5mm (pen).

Visit pcmag.com for the full reviews of these and other consumer electronics products.



LastPass 1.50

Free



PROS Automatically captures and replays log-in credentials. Fills Web forms. Data is stored online, decrypted locally. Can be accessed from any browser; supports many browsers. Imports from the competition. Has numerous mobility options.

CONS Online storage may worry some users. Doesn't rate strength of previously saved passwords. Stores only one credit card per profile.

LastPass 1.50

So Long, Forgotten Passwords

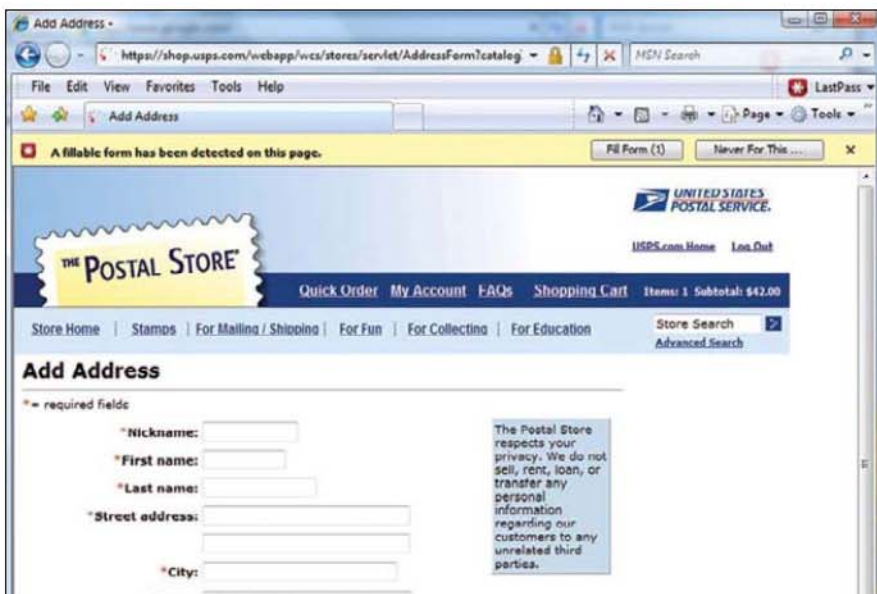


There are many tools to help you manage the plethora of passwords we all accumulate online. Some just manage passwords, some also fill in Web forms, some can go portable on a USB key, and some can print out your collected passwords. My new favorite is LastPass 1.50, which offers just about every feature found in any of its competition at an attractive price—free!

One big difference between LastPass and the rest is that it stores your form-fill and password data online. RoboForm Pro 6.3 will eventually have a similar feature, but it's still in beta. On the plus side, that means

you can access your data from any browser. On the worrisome side, that means that this sensitive data is stored on somebody else's server. LastPass goes to great lengths to explain why this is safe: While your data is in storage and during transmission across the Web, it remains protected by 256-bit AES encryption. The data gets decrypted only on your local system, using a strong master password that only you know. If you forget the master password, LastPass can't recover your data. All you can do in that case is wipe out your account and start over.

During install, LastPass imports passwords from Internet Explorer and Firefox



SAFE AND CONVENIENT

Along with keeping your passwords, LastPass also has a form-data feature that can keep secure fill-in data for on-line shopping and other forms.



SECURE PROFILE

Your profile and data on LastPass is protected by 256-bit AES encryption and a master password only you know.

and puts them in a secure location (offering to delete them from the insecure location). Like almost every modern password manager, LastPass automatically captures the username and password as you log in to most Web sites. Moreover, it captures passwords entered using the separate Windows password dialog. And the 1-Click feature handles nonstandard field types and multipage log-ins by letting you save all data fields on each page. LastPass can also

import existing password and form data from other apps. Because LastPass is an online service, you can access it from anywhere.

LastPass's catchphrase is "The last password you'll ever need," and I think the app does a pretty good job of living up to that claim. It therefore gets our new Editors' Choice for password management.

—Neil J. Rubenking

[>>CLICK HERE FOR MORE](#)





CyberLink DVD Suite 7 Ultra

Ultra, \$129.95 direct;
Centra, \$79.95



PROS Plays Blu-ray content. Fastest DVD burning. Fastest Blu-ray rendering. Fewer crashes than other suites.

CONS No audio-editing software. Start interface is less customizable than the competition's. Ultra edition is more expensive than other suites. Some overlap of functions among the included apps.

CyberLink DVD Suite 7 Ultra

Superior Video Editing



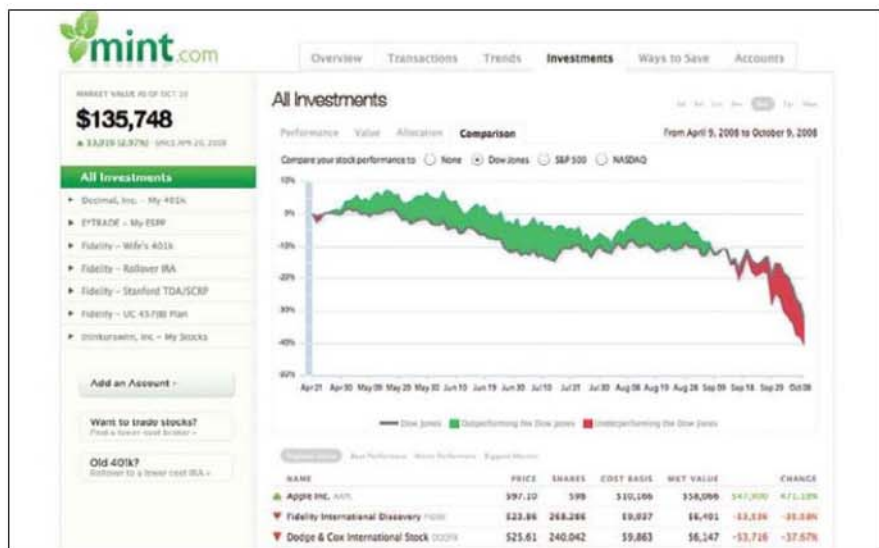
If you could judge video-editing suites solely on the number of features they offer, then CyberLink DVD Suite 7 would lose to Nero 9 and Roxio Creator 2009. But the quality of CyberLink Suite 7's core components and interface puts it ahead of the competition. This is the only one of the bunch that doesn't include audio-editing or music-track-mixing software. And it doesn't have quite as many applets as Nero or Roxio, but neither does it cause as many headaches. What it does offer is the slickest video editor of the bunch, a simple start screen, and far fewer error messages.

CyberLink's PowerStarter start-up interface improves on Roxio and Nero because it doesn't offer too many choices and doesn't stay open when you launch sub-apps. For burning DVDs, the app uses PowerDVD

Copy and Power2Go for movie and data copying, respectively—and both performed well on my test burns. PowerProducer is the suite's utility for burning Blu-ray video discs. You can also rip and burn audio CDs.

PowerDirector, the suite's video-editing software, currently holds our Editors' Choice for consumer video editors. The three-pane video-editing interface, with source content at the top left, timeline along the bottom, and preview at top right, is probably the most clearly laid out of those I've used. And PhotoNow! even lets you perform basic photo-editing tasks (though Picasa is bit better). Overall the CyberLink suite is not as complex, but it is much easier to use and hogs fewer system resources—thus earning our Editors' Choice for media software suites.—*Michael Muchmore*

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**Mint.com (Winter 2009)**

Free



PROS Extraordinarily clean, attractive, simple interface. Now tracks real estate, vehicles, and investments. Finds deals on finance products. Excellent personal-finance tools.

CONS Portfolio tracker not customizable. Can't manually enter cash transactions.

Mint.com

The Best Way to Track Your Money Online



Complexity is the enemy when it comes to personal finance, according to Mint.com. Since the last time we reviewed the site, Mint.com's developers have added tracking tools for investments, real estate, and vehicles. The site lists categorized transactions, shows you where you're spending your money, and displays the value and allocation of your investments. It even checks your portfolio against major indices. Mint.com learns from you, alerts you to potential problems, and suggests ways to save money on your financial products.

Mint.com's interface is one of the best I've ever seen: clean, crisp, colorful, and so simply designed that you can't get lost. The dashboard—called the *Overview*—is also very

good, providing you a one-page summary of your complete financial picture, updated every evening (or manually). All account totals run in a vertical pane on the left. Alerts appear at the top, and you can customize them to notify you via e-mail or phone when an account drops below a certain amount or when you exceed your budget.

The innovative, personalized *Ways to Save* tool helps you cut fees on credit cards, checking accounts, and savings accounts. You can either let Mint.com pull in your own profile based on your account information, or move a slider to change values. Mint.com's usability, up-to-date look, and smart blend of personal finance tools make it an obvious recommendation.—Kathy Yaka/

[>>CLICK HERE FOR MORE](#)

	SECURITY	ONLINE STORAGE	MOBILE APPS	
	Norton 360 Version 3.0 Three licenses, \$79.99 yearly; Premier edition, \$99.99 	Dropbox Basic (2GB), free; Pro (50GB), \$9.99 per month or \$99 per year 	Kindle for iPhone Free 	TV.com (for iPhone) Free 
PROS	• Speedy installation • Minimal performance impact • Praised by AV test labs • Powerful firewall • Blocks bad sites • Local, online backup • PC Tune-up • Detailed history, diagnostic reports	• Transparent automatic synchronization of a dedicated folder • Smooth operation on Windows, Mac, and Linux • Good Web interface • Allows access to deleted files and earlier versions • Tight OS integration	• Offers the most (and most current) titles of any iPhone e-book reader app • Syncing holds your place-mark on multiple devices	• Slick, easy-to-use interface • Great bookmarking options
CONS	• Serious problems with chat-based support during testing • Antispam still inaccurate • Parental control still rudimentary • Backup doesn't store previous file versions	• Current version synchronizes only one dedicated folder and its subfolders	• Little interface customization • No page-turning animation • No transfer of your own docs to the phone • No book purchase from within the app • No periodicals • Weak help	• Needs more and better content
BOTTOM LINE	Norton 360 offers the same security protection as Norton 2009 and adds PC Tune-up, a comprehensive local and online backup utility, and many new and enhanced features.	Dropbox is a superbly implemented cloud-based automatic file-synchronization service that's ideal for working with files you can store in a single folder.	Amazon brings e-book reading on the iPhone to a new level by opening up its huge catalog of Kindle titles to Apple's smartphone darling. But the reader itself is limited compared with competitors like Stanza and Classics.	TV.com is a good-looking, responsive video-streaming app for the iPhone—too bad CBS is being stingy with content.

RED indicates Editors' Choice

FINANCE		MUSIC	GAMES
Yodlee MoneyCenter Free 	Quicken Online (Winter 2009) Free 	Amazon MP3 (Winter 2009) Free 	MLB 09: The Show For PS3, \$59.99 list 
• Comprehensive coverage of personal finance topics • Graphical calendar • Good alerts • Tight security	• Free • Excellent interface • Good blend of features • Cash account • Flexible budget	• No DRM • No subscription required • Low prices, especially on albums • Download manager automatically adds songs to iTunes or WMP library • Shoppers can preview individual tracks or entire albums	• Detailed baseball simulation • Multiple game-play modes for all types of players
• Dated interface • Uses too much screen real estate in tracking e-mail and news	• Minimal investment tracking • No property tracking • Minimal dashboard information	• Storefront lacks pizzazz • Minimal music-discovery tools • Difficult to sort among MP3s, MP3 albums, and physical CDs in search results • Lacks iTunes' diverse array of video content	• Hitting can be tricky • Exclusive to the PlayStation platform
As the engine for numerous financial institutions, Yodlee MoneyCenter was a pioneer in account aggregation. That shows in the depth of its features—but also in the outdated interface.	Quicken Online has made a good start as a one-step personal-finance tracker; it's attractive and quite usable, and covers the core topics. But the competition does more.	Amazon does digital music right with its DRM-free MP3 store, combining competitive pricing with an easy shopping experience and hassle-free listening. Still, it's not as slick as the (often more expensive) iTunes Store.	MLB 09: The Show is an intense baseball simulation that takes a player from the minors all the way to the major leagues.

Visit pcmag.com for the full reviews of these and scores of other software products.





JOHN C. DVORAK

Data Mining and the Death of Privacy

As you read this column, someone somewhere is probably lurking in your life, plowing through everything you do online to try to learn more about you. And while there are plenty of reasons why a person might want to do this, here's the most likely one: He or she is finding a way to rob you blind by selling you lots of stuff you probably don't need. Why do you acquiesce? Because this person knows your hot buttons well.

Deep information about individuals has always been the holy grail of marketers. If I know everything about your tastes, likes and dislikes, attitudes, and even casual thoughts, I'll bet I can find something you want to buy, and persuade you to buy it from me.

Google is now the most dangerous company in the world, not only because it constantly acquires this deep information, but because it keeps striving to do it better and better. Recently I was in my Google e-mail account and found a peculiar message: "Lots of space—over 7313.643755

megabytes (and counting) of free storage so you'll never need to delete another message." The last time I was paying attention I had a gigabyte and then maybe two. Now 7 and growing? And why is Google encouraging me to save all my e-mail on its servers?

Because it's data-mining me.

I don't keep my e-mail on Google but on the server of a friend of mine, so I don't have to worry about being data-mined. But imagine the weird stuff you could find out about me if you had access to the 61,000 messages in the inbox, and 30,000 in the outbox!

Does anyone feel uncomfortable about any of this? You can easily profile someone with this many messages; you can find out his or her political leanings, love affairs, bad habits, banking information, you name it.

Now I would hate to accuse Google of doing anything nefarious, but let's face it, Google is more of a marketing technology company than anything else. And this brings us to Blogger and Twitter. If you think going through scads of e-mail is a data-mining

Google has all your search information. It has all the e-mails you've written. Your tweets are next.

bonanza, imagine going through every thought and action and (gasp!) tweet.

Lots of people tweet about what they're doing minute by minute. But the real gold mine for marketers—and the reason it seems obvious Google will, or should, buy Twitter—is the links. People are constantly posting links on Twitter, and they're turned into Tiny URLs that can easily be tracked. So if something is causing a buzz, it can be monitored. And if it can be monitored it can be exploited. If it can be exploited then something can be sold. A product can be marketed using the information.

Potential to Be Evil

At some point we have to say: "Google, stop already!"

It won't matter. Google has your search information; all the searches you've ever done are documented. It has all the e-mails you've written, and all your tweets are next. Not to mention your blog posts, spreadsheets, and who knows what else. No wonder the company's motto is "Don't be evil." Because the potential is certainly there.

Now I believe that Google does not want to be evil with all this data. It wants to sell advertising. Let's face it, who needs the aggravation of finding a way to exploit every little step you take? What difference does it make to Google whether you are pro-life or a vegan or a member of the alliance to save the red-crested hornbeam?

There is some sales angle, yes, but nothing sinister, right?

Well, not on the part of Google. But what about others who may eventually get access to this treasure trove of data? What about a political party that wants to monitor the "enemy"? You have noticed that since the days of Dick Nixon the word "enemy" is used openly to describe the people who do not support the party in power, right? This is a term I do not take lightly. It's loaded and betrays the mind-set of the person using the term. It's not good.

The point is obvious. Data mining is too powerful to be left to good old-fashioned advertising. I can imagine using it to determine what stock is going to skyrocket by extracting inside information. Blackmail is not out of the question, although collecting the right data might take some seriously interesting algorithms. Of course there is just plain old snooping. How would you like access to all the world's e-mail? What fun.

No matter how you cut this pie, what is going on can't end in any positive way. If Google buys Twitter, as everyone is saying it will, the motive has to be more data mining on top of what is already going on. And it would be a signal that the final nail is in the privacy coffin. Have a nice day.

DVORAK LIVE ON THE WEB John's Internet TV show airs every Wednesday at 3:30 ET on *Cranky-Geeks.com*. You can download back episodes whenever you like.



Dvorak's In

The Slipstream Dilemma

Dept.: Sometime around November I noticed that I could no longer upload material on some of the new media Web sites. When I tried to stream audio the browser suddenly got hung up. Something was amiss, and I ended up having to reset my trusty old Belkin Pre-N router to get back online. Once I reset it, the router worked fine, until I hit another site with media.

All these sites have **one thing in common:** They use **fancy edge systems** to boost performance. By this I mean the kinds of network utilities such as Akamai, which **reroutes packets** and does God knows what to produce a snappy response for the user.

I wondered if others who used pre-n routers were having similar problems. I have to assume **some protocol** used for this edge technology confused my pre-n device. I gave up trying to determine the cause and tossed the old router. Now I use the **Belkin N+** router, which costs under \$100 (if you shop around) and uses 802.11n 2.0 technology for better range. It also features a USB port to turn any USB device into a network device. The ports are all Gigabit Ethernet. It installed like a dream and runs like a truck, with no

tweaking needed. Oh, and I'm no longer having those "problems."

Entropy at Work Dept.: Among the hottest technologies about to appear are **femtocells**. It would make more sense to term these devices "personal repeaters" because they are essentially **small-cell signal repeaters** that you can put in your home so you get perfect cellular coverage all over the house. This technology was given a big boost by the arrival of a new set of standards agreed upon by the Broadband Forum, the 3rd Generation Partnership Project (3GPP), and the Femto Forum.

The idea, of course, is not only to make the cell phone more ubiquitous but also to persuade more folks to use it as a **land-line replacement**. I'm not liking this trend. I have friends who have already thrown out their landlines and use only cell phones, and **I can barely understand them when they call**. How about a forum on quality of service? **Cell phones drop calls**, the coverage is spotty, and the sound quality is mediocre. So let's use them more!

Ode to the Intel Atom Dept.: I needed to put together a couple of simple machines lately running just Linux, a good word processor, and a browser (what else do most office machines actually need?). Intel produces a slew of Atom-based motherboards with everything on them except

sideTrack

the disk drives and main memory. They come in various form factors, including Mini-ITX and Mini-ATX, and **run like small army tanks**. Great little machines can be quickly thrown together with leftover parts using these slick motherboards. I particularly like the D945GCLF, which can be had—with processor—for around \$75.

Think of the possibilities.

Crackpot Technology, Breakthrough, or Hoax Dept.: One of the weirdest things I've read lately was a report in the *EETimes* (datelined Portland, Oregon, for some strange reason) about how some MIT folks have **bred some specific virus to multiply and then assemble components** for nano-size battery cells. April Fool's, right? Well, the date of the story was April 2. Now I suppose anything is possible, but since I can't get my kids to clean up their rooms I am not sure how you train a virus to do warehouse work and subassembly at the nano factory. MIT often shows **dubious** technologies, so it is probably an actual project. But would it ever work? Let me put it this way. When I see it, I'll believe it.

Everyone wants to find a battery technology breakthrough. My pick to click is called **lithium titanate**. You'll be hearing more and more about this technology in the years ahead. It's everything you want in a battery without ravaging the planet

(NiMH) or exploding every so often (lithium ion). It **charges the fastest and lasts forever**. I'm not sure, though, if those hard-working viruses can assemble them. Ha!

What's a Netbook, Anyway Dept.: The hottest ticket in computerdom is the netbook market. It's growing like crazy, and the **public loves** these little gems. This idea goes a ways back and, as far as I'm concerned, has been successful only recently because **the screens are stunning**—thus making the machines usable. You'd go blind in the past trying to use the screens. But as this trend finally merges with notebooks and laptops, the lines will be blurred. No, wait, they have just been **blurred by the likes of Samsung** and others who are producing a machine with a full-size keyboard, a spinning hard disk, and a 10.2-inch screen. They are calling these things netbooks, too. Folks, this is a small laptop, not a netbook. We need to draw the line someplace if we want this category of machines to be distinct. At least if you want to make a huge netbook, call it a mega-netbook or something new. My advice? **Let ASUS decide** on the definition—it's the company that invented the product category.

WANT MORE DVORAK? John writes a weekly column for our Web site, too. Log on to go.pcmag.com/dvorak. You can also e-mail him at john_dvorak@pcmag.com.





SASCHA SEGAN

We Are All Media Now

Looks as if Al Gore is still firmly stuck on the 20th-century end of his “bridge to the 21st century.” In attempting (and failing) to bar “media” from his speech at the CTIA Wireless trade show last month, he showed his total failure to understand the basic 21st-century truth being repeated ad nauseam at the South by Southwest music and media conference (also last month): In the era of Twitter, we are all media.

Here is Gore’s tantrum in a nutshell: The former vice president was scheduled to give a keynote in front of 4,000 people at CTIA, and before the speech he tried to ban people with media badges from the room. After several Web sites pointed out that a room of 4,000 people at a cell-phone convention is a room with at least 3,000 people live-blogging on Twitter, he relented.

Gore’s speech was moderately interesting and uncontroversial; he outlined ways to improve the economy and environment with technologies such as smart electrical grids and said that wireless devices are playing a powerful role in politics. There was nothing to make you think the author wouldn’t have wanted the speech to get out.

What about Twitter, Mr. Gore?

After the spat appeared on the popular news-industry blog Romenesko, a few other journalists guessed who Gore’s real target might be. According to them, he has a vendetta against certain large, old-school media organizations that he blames for having cost him the 2000 election; his media ban was aimed at them. Gore is probably a little cannier than I first thought, because what he may be exploiting is the difference between three overlapping classes of media right now: just plain media, professional media, and something I’ll call certifiable media (pun intended). With Twitter, everyone is media. Automatically. Anyone who recounts any experience in 140 characters gets the report published on the Web, where it’s as searchable as anything I write. Instant media.

Twitter, with its millions of users, is a democratic step way beyond CNN’s iReport, Al Gore’s own Current TV, and venerable community-run Indymedia sites, all of which harness the work of independent, volunteer writers and build what looks like a professional media site from them.

I like Twitter a heck of a lot more than CNN, and a lot more than Gore’s approach,

The big question is not whether you're paid, but how many readers you represent.

too, and here's why: It doesn't make any money. CNN is basically using its iReporters as unpaid labor to generate a profit. In my mind, if you're helping someone generate a profit, you should be getting paid for your effort.

Professional versus certifiable media

So here is where we get to professional media, or people who do get paid for their efforts. This is a key part of CTIA's definition of media, and it's useful to have professional media. Getting paid tends to give us the time to develop expertise beyond the amateur level. Having been studying cell phones for almost five years, I've talked on several hundred different cell phones. I probably couldn't have done that if I had a different day job.

But professional media is different from certifiable media—which is actually the most important group. Certifiable media is certifiable because it represents the people in many places and events. And here we get to Al Gore.

There's only a certain number of seats in the White House press room, in Apple's briefing room, or even in the hall where Al Gore is giving his keynote. Bill Gates has only a certain number of hours in a day to give interviews. In a 15-minute session, a CEO can answer only a certain number of questions. There will be scarcity of access as long as there is scarcity of space and time.

As a society, we want those seats to be taken up by people who represent as many other people as possible, and who do that with as much intelligence as possible. The controlling question then becomes not whether you're paid, but how many readers you have: Whom do you represent?

The Web levels the playing field

Web analytics allows us to answer this question objectively. Let's show everyone our page view counts. Let's use those to judge whether we represent a grand enough constituency to be allowed in the door. We need to make sure that primary media sources—those who represent the largest audiences—get access to original information. From there, the word will spread.

The Internet has democratized punditry. As long as we have good primary sources, a million secondary analyses will bloom without anyone having to worry about them. Fortunately, new technologies and the popularization of micro-media have made the media landscape far more resilient than in the past, and the range of primary sources is widening.

If you open your mouth in public, information will get out. That's just the way life goes on the other end of the bridge to the 21st century.

STAY PHONE-SMART Keep up with the latest on smartphones by reading Sascha's column at go.pcmag.com/segan.





DAN COSTA

One Cell Phone Per Child

The buzz at CTIA this year was all about the BlackBerry App World, the iPhone 3.0, and the imminent arrival of the Palm Pre. But those are all primarily U.S.-focused stories. There is a bigger story unfolding—one that has been largely overlooked by the tech press: The phenomenal effect that widespread cell-phone proliferation is having on the developing world. A few years ago, PCs were the primary tools for connecting to the Internet, with programs like One Laptop Per Child being conceived to harness their power. Globally, the mobile phone is now the primary communication tool. This shift has had a stunning impact on developing nations, the wireless industry, and even the Internet itself.

To understand the scale of the worldwide mobile revolution, consider that 4.1 billion people subscribe to a mobile-phone service, according to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), which is part of the United Nations. More than half of the world's people are connected. High costs and spotty Internet access limit the functionality of those connections for many users, but the infrastructure is there. For

much of the developing world, wireless has leapfrogged landlines. In 1990, there were about 14,000 mobile-phone subscriptions in Africa, according to the ITU. Today, there are 280 million.

How big an effect do mobile phones have on a developing nation? According to research done by Vodafone, increasing the number of mobile phones per 100 people by just 10 increases GDP growth by as much as 6 percent in developing countries. Even with limited Internet capabilities, mobile phones can do way more than just place voice calls. Here are a few uses you may not have thought of:

Making money mobile

Developing nations tend to be cash-based societies, and that comes with some serious downsides. People can pay—or be paid—only in cash. Approximately 80 percent of adults in Africa have no access to modern banks. Not only does this limit the ability of financial capital to work in a given country, but it also exposes individuals to the risk of robbery and contributes to the widespread corruption that often plagues developing economies.

Even with limited Internet access, mobile phones can do way more than just place voice calls.

A simple cell phone can change this. Companies like MAP International are creating public-private partnerships to build banking infrastructures that can operate via simple cell phones; for example, the company is working on setting up a cell-phone bill-paying system in Uganda.

Distance education

Here in the U.S., we tend to think of distance education as online night courses at the University of Phoenix. In the developing world, distance education is often more basic, and some of it can be done via phone. Just look at mLearnopedia, which offers many mobile learning applications. Or the Mobiled project in South Africa, which is using cheap mobile phones to create a mobile audio-Wikipedia with a combination of SMS and text-to-speech technologies.

Political organization

Cell phones can also be a tool for activism in nations where the traditional media is often controlled by the government. Text messages from citizens have been used to monitor several recent elections in Africa, including those in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Kenya. Using an off-the-shelf software service like Frontline SMS, NGOs can quickly set up stations where voters can report fraud and intimidation. This won't eliminate oppression overnight, but it's an inherently democratic process enabled by cell phones.

Better prices

That type of SMS network can also be used to disseminate pricing information on commodities to eliminate inefficiencies, price gouging, and outright fraud. Winrock International is using Frontline SMS to connect farmers in El Salvador, establish fair prices for goods, and negotiate sales. For many farmers, simply knowing the fair market price of their crop is invaluable information. And that can be delivered via mobile phone.

Remote health care

With contributors all over the world, Data-Dyne.org, a nonprofit open-source software group, is working on health-care solutions that take advantage of the mobile infrastructures. It is using the EpiSurveyor mobile public health toolkit to collect health-care data, monitor infection patterns, and coordinate treatment.

If I sound optimistic, it's because I am. True, business and the profit motive have been driving almost all these efforts. So far, letting business take the lead has been pretty effective, but a lot of projects require government coordination. I just hope that governments and NGOs aren't so infatuated with the OLPC that they overlook the millions of portable computers that are already in people's hands.

TALK BACK TO DAN Let Dan know what's on your mind. E-mail your thoughts and responses to his columns to dan_costa@ziffdavis.com.





Music. Photos. Video. Documents.
These days, the Internet is all
about sharing media with friends,
family, and colleagues. Here's
how you can get started, and
some advanced techniques to do
much more. *By Eric Griffith*

Share Everything

GOT A VACATION VIDEO THAT THE WORLD needs to see? Think your music taste can't miss? Wish the grandparents several states away could see your kid's birthday pictures? Then you probably did well in kindergarten—you're a natural-born sharer.

While millions of people share pictures, music, videos, and even documents every day, it can still be pretty daunting to get started. We're going to walk you through the steps it takes to become a sharer (or broadcaster), using the most popular sites for the various types of media.



YouTube Broadcast Yourself™
Worldwide | English

Sign Up | QuickList (0) | Help | Sign Out

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Search

Upload

Emma's Birthday Party



gpholmes
August 30, 2007
(more info)

Subscribe

Type 1 kids like the same things as other kids. They like to have parties, play with their friends and enjoy treats. Unfortunately, these kids face unpleasant consequences.

URL: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RMbmTzV>

Embed: `<object width="425" height="344"><param name="movie" value="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RMbmTzV"></object>`

More From: gpholmes

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1:00
- Birthday Party at Pump it Up.**
15,330 views
Gragz

7 ratings

10,662 views

Favorite Share Playlists Flag

MySpace Facebook Twitter (more share options)

Statistics & Data

VIDEO

Become a YouTube Celebrity

YouTube doesn't need any introduction, does it? It's the poster child of Internet video—the site that TV networks and movie studios can't stand (unless they've cut a deal), and where the average person goes to find clips of, well, just about anything.

YouTube is free—there are ads on the pages with your videos—but the site has some limitations. Whatever video you upload is restricted to 1GB in size or 10 minutes in duration, for example. On the plus

side, a YouTube video can now be uploaded in high definition, if that's how it was shot. To ensure that the site displays your videos in all their glory, follow our guidelines. To share a file, first make sure it's in the right format. YouTube prefers videos in H.264, MPEG-2, or MPEG-4 format, but it works with Windows' AVI files and QuickTime's MOV files as well. YouTube particularly recommends using MPEG-4 files made with the DivX or Xvid codecs. To determine which format a certain file is in, right-click it and check the

Properties dialog. For even more data, you can install a tool such as the GSpot codec information appliance.

Ways to Upload

From the Web

Log in to your YouTube account, click the yellow **Upload** button in the upper right-hand corner, browse to your video on your hard drive, and then click **Upload**. You can add up to ten videos at a time. Make sure to fill out all of the video's metadata, such as its title, size, and whether it should be public or private. If you have more than ten videos to upload, visit the Multi-Video Upload page and just keep adding files. And don't forget to pick a thumbnail for your videos.

From a mobile phone

Send phone-cam videos directly to your YouTube account with Mobile Setup. Just

enter your phone number and carrier and YouTube gives you an e-mail to send the files via MMS (Multimedia Messaging Service).

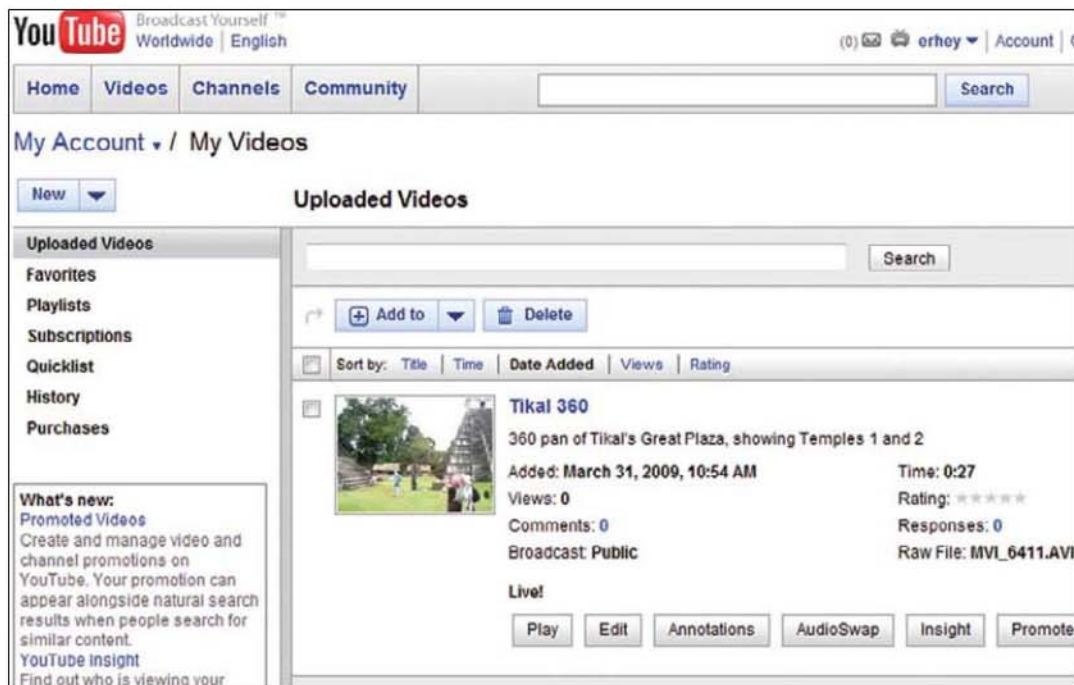
Directly from a camera

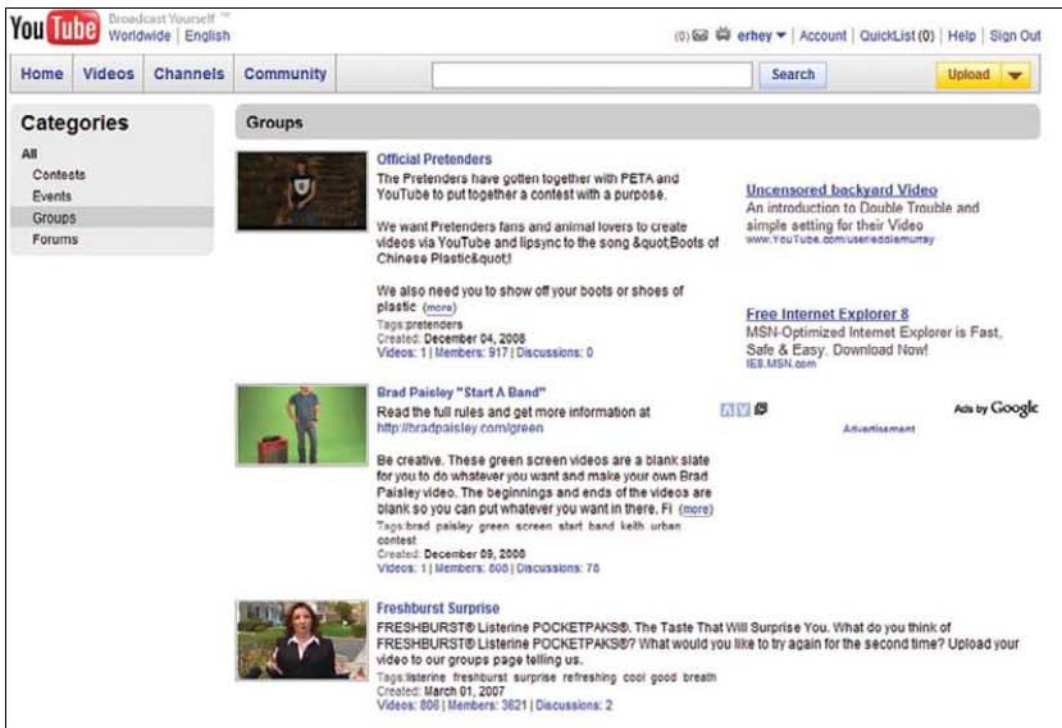
Pure Digital's various Flip Mino cameras have integrated software, and cameras such as the Samsung SC-HMX20C and Kodak Zi6 Pocket Video Camera come with software for editing video on your PC. (For a wealth of other options, see our story "HD Video for Every Budget" at PCMag.com). And all webcams should work with the YouTube Quick Capture page.

From integrated software

Plenty of programs have YouTube support built in—for example, Google's Picasa. Version 3.0 has a "Movie" icon in the toolbar, and you can add an MP3 file as the soundtrack to your video.

SHARE THE LOAD YouTube's Upload feature lets you post up to ten videos at a time.





JOIN THE GROUP You can start a group for related videos or add videos to an existing one.

A HELPING HAND Video DownloadHelper, a Firefox add-on, is useful for downloading and converting YouTube videos.



Ways to Share

Social networks

Once you've uploaded your video, click the **More Share Options** link on the YouTube page where it appears. You'll then see a number of options you can use to share your video through social-networking outlets such as Facebook, MySpace, Orkut, Digg, Microsoft Live Spaces, Bebo, hi5, or Mixx.

E-mail links

YouTube also provides a link for you to copy and paste your video into an e-mail message that you can send to yourself or anyone else in your contacts list. You can import contacts from Google's Gmail directly into your YouTube address book. Then when you want to send out the link to the video, it's as easy as a few clicks.

Embedding

To embed a video on YouTube into another Web page, enter this code (you can copy and paste it from this site):

```
<object width="425" height="344"><param
name="movie" value="http://www.youtube
.com/v/-i8_HvBcoEc&hl=en&fs=1"></param>
<param name="allowFullScreen"
value="true"></param><param
name="allowsriptaccess"
value="always"></param><embed
src="http://www.youtube.com/v/-i8_
HvBcoEc&hl=en&fs=1" type="application/
x-shockwave-flash" allowsriptaccess="al
ways" allowfullscreen="true" width="425"
height="344"></embed></object>
```

If you want to embed just a part of a YouTube video, you can use Splicd.

Auto-blogging

Videos you upload can be sent directly to

your blog by visiting the Blog Setup section in YouTube's Account Settings. That's where you can specify a Blogger, Friendster, WordPress, or LiveJournal account to which your videos will be automatically posted.

Downloads

Whether downloading a YouTube video (and converting it to another format) is sharing or stealing is for you to decide. Zamzar.com, a free file-conversion site, has a Download Videos tab for converting and downloading YouTube videos. You can also use a Firefox add-on called Video DownloadHelper.

Syndication

Push people who watch your videos to subscribe using the Subscribe button on every page. It's great for those who frequently revisit YouTube. They can also subscribe using RSS by visiting the full user page (such as www.youtube.com/user/username).

OTHER VIDEO SITES

DailyMotion

This free site puts no restrictions on file size or video duration. To join the site, you must agree not to upload copyrighted material.

Facebook

The ubiquitous social network lets you upload videos of 20 minutes and 2GB max, and it's free—with ads.

Motionbox

New to the game, Motionbox specializes in HD content that looks fantastic at full screen. For \$30 per year, Motionbox lets you upload files as large as 2GB, of any duration.

Vimeo

This veteran service sports a lot of high-quality content. Files are limited to 500MB, and you can upload only one HD video per week unless you subscribe to Vimeo Plus (\$59.95 a year).



Unexpected Family Reunion



Last night I talked to my cousin Paul in Australia for the first time. He called us and then we talked via IChat on AOL Messenger. Very cool. He sent me this photograph he took earlier this year in the Bronx, New York.

The Family. We were a strange little band of characters trudging through life sharing diseases and toothpaste, coveting one another's desserts, hiding shampoo, borrowing money, locking each other out of our rooms, inflicting pain and kissing to heal it in the same instant, loving, laughing, defending, and trying to figure out the common thread that bound us all together. ~Erma Bombeck

Uploaded on December 12, 2004
by [joaobambu](#)

joaobambu's photostream



16,604
uploads

This photo also belongs to:

Explore / Interestingness (Set)



228
items

Part of: Favorites

La Famiglia Paglione en Brasile (Set)



189
items

PHOTOS

Share Your High-Res 'Flickr's' of Genius

Flickr hosts over 3 billion images for its users—basically anyone with a Yahoo account, since the service was purchased by the search giant. Flickr's raison d'être is sharing. If you want to do any image editing or manipulation, Flickr leaves that to other products (like the online-only Picnik or Yahoo's own

Jumpcut). And it supports video.

Flickr limits photo size to 10MB for a free account and 20MB for premium membership. Only Pro users can upload videos, and even they are limited to 150MB and 90 seconds per video. To share your content, you set a Creative Commons license with your photo so that users can see and download

flickr[®]

Home You ▾ Organize ▾ Contacts ▾ Group ▾

Describe this upload

Or, [open in Organizer](#) for more fine-grained control.

Batch operations

Add Tags [?]

Titles, descriptions, tags



Title:

GET TAGGING When you upload photos to Flickr, don't forget to tag images with descriptive terms that will help people find them.

the photo at "All Sizes." A Pro membership also means you get unlimited storage and don't have to look at advertising. A number of third-party photo-editing apps work hand in hand with Flickr (you must authorize the software through Flickr, but that's a fairly simple procedure). Remember, if you want anyone to find your pics on Flickr, you must make sure you take the time to tag the heck out of them.

Ways to Upload

Online

The simplest way to get images to Flickr, naturally, is the Upload page, which can upload up to six images at one time. The flashier version—built with Adobe Flash—does the same thing with far more images and looks nicer, to boot.

Flickr Uploadr

Flickr has its own software, the Uploadr, for both Windows Vista/XP and Mac OS (10.4 and 10.5), which is available in eight different languages. Once you've set up the software with your Flickr account credentials, drag and drop a photo file on the icon that it adds to your desktop.

E-mail

Every Flickr user gets a completely unique e-mail address to send photos, which is best for getting images off a camera phone. You can preset tags on your account to tag any photos uploaded in this way.

iPhone apps

You can use the Mobile Flickr interface to look at your account, as well as the Darkslide iPhone app. Both offer a quick upload option for shots taken with the iPhone's camera, though the upload interface Flickit is a bit nicer.

Plug-in uploaders

The Firefox browser has add-ons to assist in quicker, more efficient Flickr uploading, such as FireUploader. This plug-in uploads

**silhouette**

Group Pool Discussion 15,814 Members Map Join This Group

Group Pool ([98,909 photos](#)) | Only members can add to the pool. [Join?](#)NEW From [Euti](#)NEW From [HiNoboru](#)NEW From [Ben Kimball](#)NEW From [Zorro ap](#)NEW From [Zorro ap](#)NEW From [Zorro ap](#)NEW From [Zorro ap](#)NEW From [Zorro ap](#)NEW From [curlyARTSeam](#)NEW From [Canis Major](#)NEW From [Kr. B.](#)NEW From [Juvqa](#)**zen (a group admin) says:**

19 Jan 09 - Please do not confuse Silhouette with Outline. Just because you can see the shape of something doesn't mean it's silhouette (by this group's definition) - Think of things with the light behind them, and you're in their shadow. Then, it's a silhouette

Thank you!

GROUP EFFORT Pending approval from a group admin, you can join a Flickr group to share pics.

to Flickr, not to mention YouTube, Facebook, Picasa, SmugMug, Google Docs, and other sites. But plug-ins aren't just for browsers. Quicksilver, the beloved Macintosh time-saver, has one. So does iPhoto, via the FlickrExport tool. And don't forget our Editors' Choice, Picasa 3. There's also [picasa2flickr](#), a plug-in to Picasa that makes uploading an easy matter.

Desktop widgets

Finally, if you're running the Yahoo Widget Engine, a bunch of desktop widgets exists that let you drag and drop an image (or video) on a Web page, or "blog it."

Ways to Share**Share This feature**

Every Flickr photo has a "Share This" link in the upper right, where the drop-down menu gives you options to send the image via e-mail. Or you can grab a link to the image and send it in an instant message, embed the image (or video) on a Web page, or blog it.

Join groups

Joining groups on Flickr—if they'll have you—provides an instant community to share your work. If you've got a good photo, click the "Send to Group" button (you'll find it over the pic only if you've joined a group).

Blogs

Over most pics for public consumption on Flickr is an icon that reads “Blog This.” For it to work, you need to set up your blog on your Extending Flickr page. Once you’ve done that, it’s simple to blog your pics or anyone else’s. If you’ve set Flickr to recognize your blog account, the service will give you a second e-mail address for the blog post.

Zemanta for blogs

Zemanta is a terrific add-on for bloggers. It makes adding related links and photos to a post a breeze. And Zemanta now integrates your Flickr photostream, so if what you write matches what you tag, your own images are easily added to your posts.

Flash the badge

Flickr’s badges—little strips showing your latest image uploads—come in two formats.

One is plain HTML, the other uses Adobe Flash. Flickr gives you the code you need to display either (or both!) on your Web page, social network, or blog. You can adjust the size of the images and other details.

RSS

Flickr does a fantastic job with RSS feeds. You can access an RSS feed that displays all your contacts on Flickr. You can also subscribe to the accounts of individual users, even if they aren’t friends or family members. For your own photos, Flickr also offers that same standard RSS for others to view your thumbnails, plus location-aware variations. For example, there’s one called GeoFeed, just for geotagged photos, and another for photos that can work with Google Earth (using KML, the Keyhole Markup Language). You’ll find links to all of them at the bottom of any photostream page.

OTHER PHOTO SITES

Photobucket

News Corp.’s photo- and video-sharing site—the largest image repository in the world, with nearly 7 billion images—is a perfect match for other Fox Interactive sites like MySpace. A new Photobucket iPhone app makes the Web site even more convenient.

Facebook

Of course, the premier social network of the day hosts pictures galore. The social aspect makes it easy to share them with friends, and tag the friends in those pictures, so they’ll all want to share your posts.

Picasa Web Albums

Part of our Editors’ Choice—winning Picasa 3 software, this service is now available for Windows, Mac, and Linux. If you want more than 1GB of storage online, you can pay \$20 for 10GB more.

Twitpic

Anyone with a Twitter account automatically has access to Twitpic, which lets you e-mail photos to the service using a unique address, upload them via the Web, or use a Twitter interface like Twhirl to handle it for you.





MUSIC

Make Your Friends an Imeem Mixtape

Anywhere.FM used to let you upload your music collection to share with the world. Imeem bought the service and absorbed it to create what's available as imeem today: "a social network that enables users to discover, interact, and express themselves with media." Unlike other sharing sites, which are all about user-generated content (or UGC, as the marketing types call it), imeem is equally adept at sharing commercial music. It does so in a legal way: Others can't down-

load tunes you've uploaded.

Here's how it works: You can upload your entire music collection to imeem—even music and playlists from iTunes—to have for your own listening pleasure wherever you go (as long as wherever you go has access to a Web browser and high-speed Internet), or to share with others.

You're limited to just 100 files unless you pay, however. VIPlite access costs \$9.99 per year for 100 songs and 10 videos, VIP is \$29.99 a year for 1,000 songs and 100 vid-

eos, and VIPplus is \$99.99 a year for 20,000 songs and 500 videos. Paying also lets you see who visits your imeem site and gives you full access to the sites of all others. The VIP player provides a personal online iTunes-esque interface for your music.

Ways to Upload

The Web

The basic online upload page for imeem lets you upload one song, video, or photo at a time. You can either put the file in your profile or add it to a group.

The Air

An Adobe Air app, called imeem Uploader, will take care of uploading multiple files at once. It's the kind of thing you run overnight the first time, assuming you have a few thousand files to run. (Beware of failed files: You may need to upload some again.)

Ways to Share

Create playlists

This is the bread and butter of the site. Go to My Profile and select Playlists to see all your lists, whether you uploaded them from iTunes or created them with the service. Visit a playlist's page and get several options—from embedding the playlist on

your Facebook, MySpace, Blogger, LiveJournal, Xanga, or other pages to using the provided Embed code to put the playlist on any site. (The interface is very similar to YouTube's.) You can pick whether the playlist automatically plays when it appears on a page, and whether the songs are on shuffle.

Click the **Share** button and you'll have the option to send the playlist to people in your imeem contacts list. You can import names from AOL, Gmail, Hotmail, Outlook, Yahoo Mail, or a comma-separated list.

Social networks

Imeem recently announced Twitter integration. This works via a widget on the Imeem Dashboard page that lets you add to the social-networking site. Once installed, the widget can automatically let your friends know what songs you're listening to and what playlists you're creating on imeem. If they want to hear the track you're grooving to, they simply click the link in your tweet.

Subscribe to playlists

Your playlists page has an RSS feed associated with it; look for the **RSS Feed** icon at the bottom of the page. Subscribers to that feed will see not only new playlists you create, but also each new song you add.

OTHER MUSIC-SHARING SITES

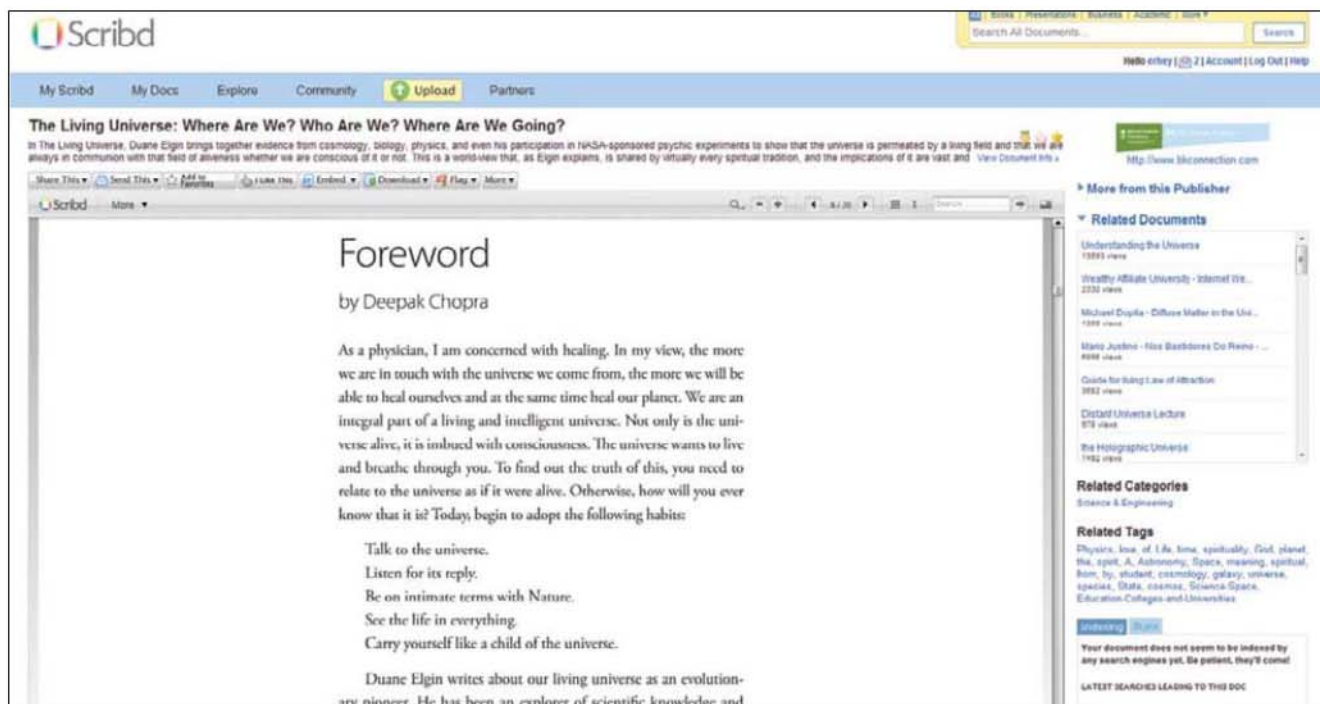
Muxtape

It's not what it once was, but the recently revamped Muxtape may still prove to be a way for new bands to promote themselves online.

Songza

Use it to search for music—it pulls results from YouTube videos and many other sources (even imeem).





DOCUMENTS

Distribute Your Documents with Scribd

Sharing text on the Web? Isn't that what every Web site does? Scribd is different. It's best used for sharing items typically found in print—books, articles, screenplays, and more. Think of it as YouTube for documents, an online digital library.

Scribd will accept electronic documents like PDFs, Word docs, and OpenOffice docs—even PowerPoint presentations and Excel spreadsheets. It converts all of them to its iPaper format—a form of Adobe Flash—

so they're readable on the site but can't be downloaded unless you want them to be.

Ways to Upload

The Web

The simplest method is to use the site's basic upload Web page, once you have set up an account. You can grab files from your hard drive, or point to the URL for a document stored on the Web somewhere. If you've got a load of documents to upload, Scribd has a Bulk Uploader application in beta for Win-

dows and Macintosh. You can also paste text in directly, if formatting is not an issue.

With your scanner

Atalasoft makes a program called Scan Documents to Scribd. It takes over when you use a scanner on a document, even offering to do OCR (optical character recognition). This turns a scanned image into words the PC can recognize, before it uploads the files to your Scribd account. By converting them to text first (using the free Google Tesseract engine), the app makes the documents searchable on the site. Atalasoft's Scan Documents to Scribd software is free.

Browser add-ons

The Scribd Slurper sounds gross, but it's actually pretty handy. This simple extension adds a "Slurp to Scribd" item to your right-click menu, letting you send a document to Scribd with a click, after entering a title and tagging the document. Note that if you are already logged in to Scribd.com, this will slurp the document into your account; otherwise it will use an anonymous account. But you don't need the add-on to slurp pages. Just type the following URL into your Web

browser, replacing **[DOCUMENT_URL]** with the URL of the document you'd like to add to Scribd: **http://www.scribd.com/slurp?url=[DOCUMENT_URL]**.

Ways to Share

Social networks

Look at any document in Scribd's My Documents area, click the **Share This** button, and you'll be confronted with an array of buttons for services you can add a bookmark to. And not just the usual social networks, but also sites like Digg, FriendFeed, Reddit, Slashdot, StumbleUpon, and Twitter, to name just a handful.

Those are just links, however. There's a separate Embed tab to get the code you need to put documents in the iPaper format on another Web page. Make sure the page is big enough for the embedding, however, or the document may be too small to read easily. And the **Send This** tab, naturally, lets you e-mail anyone from your Gmail, Windows Live, or Yahoo Mail accounts with a notification that the new iPaper document is posted and ready to view. Keep in mind that you can do this with any Scribd doc, too, not just your own.

Upload Your Documents

Share your files with millions of people, or only with the people you choose.

Click to Choose Files

To select multiple files, use the ctrl or shift key on your PC, or apple or shift key on your Mac.

Other Options

- Use the plain HTML uploader
- Upload files from a URL address
- Copy and paste text directly
- Use the Scribd Desktop Uploader

Great Reasons to Upload

- Tens of millions of people visit Scribd every month; your work could be discovered by the world!
- Every document on Scribd gets frequently indexed by Google, which means better audience targeting for your work.
- Your document will be viewed the way it was meant to be - with its unique fonts, graphics and other details.
- Check out detailed stats on viewers, ratings, downloads and more
- Take your document anywhere: just copy the embed code and insert it into a blog or other website.

WORD UP

Scribd's upload page is easy for single files, or you can use Scribd's Bulk Uploader app for multiple docs.



BOOK CLUB At Scribd, you can join any number of groups and contribute docs to the pool.

Browse Groups

recently createddocuments**members**commentsdiscussions



Amazing Images

+ Join Group

Public 5,281 documents 2,683 members 86 comments 51 discussions



Open Text Books

+ Join Group

Public 1,748 documents 1,578 members 14 comments 13 discussions

E-mail

A feature called iPaper@scribd.com is supposed to make it easy to get documents to your friends in the iPaper format. You send documents as an attachment to an ordinary e-mail message, Cc the iPaper@scribd.com address, and the other recipient gets access to the attachments in the handy iPaper format. No worries about viruses, or about firewalls blocking large attachments. If you use the e-mail address associated with your account, the documents become part of your library. (In my testing, I never got a follow-up message with links to the iPaper URLs; hours later I saw the files still processing in My Docs on Scribd. Obviously, some bugs need to be worked out.)

The Web

Several sites and services have integrated support for the iPaper format. That includes Syncplicity, the file sync/backup program that can sync your hard drive documents to the Scribd site. Drop.io, a quick file-transfer site, uses iPaper to preview documents you “drop” via the site to send to others.

Join groups

Like Flickr and other sites, Scribd has groups you can join. If your document is perfect for the group, be sure to submit it—the other members may like what you’ve posted enough to share it with others. That’s the key to all of these sharing sites—they’re as much about the social as the technical.

OTHER DOCUMENT SHARING SITES

Docstoc

More business and professionally focused than Scribd, Docstoc nevertheless has many similar features, including a Flash-based document viewer.

Issuu

Issuu is for “publications,” sure, but it isn’t limited to newsstand mags, and the site has a real international flair. It also features another Flash-based viewer, but this one offers better zooming and the ability to go full screen.



How to Buy a Bluetooth Headset

Isn't it time you went hands-free with a Bluetooth headset? Here's what you need to look for when choosing the perfect companion for your mobile phone. *By Jamie Lendino*

Picking the right Bluetooth headset might seem simple, but it actually comes with a challenge: It's tough (and not completely sanitary) to try out different models before plunking down the cash for them. How a headset feels and fits is crucial, and that varies widely from person to person—even from ear to ear. Other

factors also come into play: Sound quality, design and style, and battery life are important, too. We've come up with eight points you should consider when shopping for your next Bluetooth headset.

Call Quality

If this is your most important consideration, you'll want to check out the Plantronics Voy-



Aliph New Jawbone

\$129.99 list



Our current Editors' Choice Bluetooth headset beats all comers with its excellent sound quality, noise cancellation, and sharp looks. It doesn't last very long on a charge, though, and some users have complained about its odd fit.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE](#)



BlueAnt Z9i

\$99.95 list



BlueAnt's Z9i is a stylish, comfortable Bluetooth headset with crystal-clear sound quality, although its noise suppression isn't quite as effective as it could be.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE](#)

ager 520, as well as the Aliph New Jawbone and Motorola MotoPURE H15, both of which incorporate noise-cancellation technology. Call quality varies widely among products, but we're pleased to report that even the most recent, smaller, fashion-conscious models, like the drop-dead-gorgeous Plantronics Discovery 925, finally sound as good as their larger counterparts, despite having tiny microphones and speakers.

Noise Cancellation

Aliph's original Jawbone introduced noise-cancellation technology to the masses. The

popular model is still a solid benchmark in noise-cancellation performance, although Aliph's New Jawbone steps it up with more advanced NoiseAssassin technology. Some headsets, like the BlueAnt Z9i, also do a fine job of blocking out noise and are more comfortable than the Jawbone models, which need to sit snugly against your cheek for the best performance.

Battery Life

As for endurance, here's a guiding principle: If you don't want to charge, go large. Some of the bulkier, less fashionable headsets, like



Aliph Jawbone

\$119.99 list



Aliph's older, original model provides clearly unmatched sound quality.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE](#)



Altec Lansing BackBeat

\$99.99 list



The BackBeat is an exceptionally comfortable stereo headset we wouldn't mind wearing all day for both music and voice calls. It also boasts long battery life. But like a sofa bed—which is neither a particularly stellar sofa nor a great bed—the BackBeat is a compromise in sound quality on all counts.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE](#)



BlueAnt V1 Voice Control

\$129.95 list



Gadget buffs with a flair for the cutting edge will dig the V1, BlueAnt's voice-controlled headset. It responds to spoken-word commands and offers built-in voice tutorials. It also sounds good and offers solid noise cancellation. But you may have to tell it what you want more than once before it gets the hint.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE](#)





Iqua 603 SUN

\$100 list



Not only does the Iqua 603 SUN Bluetooth headset sound good, but its integrated solar panel keeps it continually charged. Unless you're a heavy talker, you may never need to plug it in.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE](#)



Callpod Dragon

\$99.95 direct



Callpod's Dragon offers plenty of sheer functionality, but its audio performance and noise cancellation didn't measure up in testing. It's not particularly comfortable, either.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE](#)

the Plantronics Voyager 520, can last almost 9 hours on a single charge. The original Aliph Jawbone makes it to about 6 hours. The New Jawbone drops that down to a shade below 4 hours owing to its smaller, slimmer design, which lacks the room necessary for a large battery. The same is true of the Motorola H15.

Comfort

Again, this is a tough one. Some models, like the Plantronics Voyager 835, feature a rubber earbud that sits partially inside your ear. While some users may find this uncomfortable, I think it creates a secure fit without being too tight. Other models, like the Samsung WEP700, sit on the edge of your ear, while the Plantronics Voyager 510 and

520 rely more heavily on their requisite ear hooks for balance and comfort. It's all a matter of personal preference, really.

Style

Some people think that all Bluetooth headsets look silly—a view that's reinforced whenever they see people walking down the street wearing a headset even when they're not using it. If you want the best-looking device you can find, the sleek, hatpin-like Plantronics Discovery 925 and the tiny but cute Motorola H15 score points for their fetching designs. The slight but attractive Aliph New Jawbone is another head turner. Still, limiting headset use to your desk or the car will keep disapproving stares to a minimum.

Motorola MotoROKR S9-HD

\$129.99 direct



Motorola's affordable S9-HD finally gives music enthusiasts a wireless stereo Bluetooth headset that sounds good—a tough thing to come by, given the limitations of the Bluetooth codec. It's not all that great at making voice calls, though—everyone could tell we were on a headset because of an increased amount of room echo.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE](#)



Motorola MotoPURE H15

\$129.99 direct



Motorola atoned for the sins of the MotoPURE H12 by releasing the shrewdly updated H15. This slick little headset features balanced sound quality, a comfortable fit, and noise-cancellation tech that's on a par with that of the New Jawbone. But like the Aliph headset, the Motorola H15 falls down in battery life, and it doesn't quite match the Aliph on sound quality. Still, its cute, bean-like styling and more pleasing fit deserve serious consideration.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE](#)



Plantronics Discovery 925

\$149.99 list



Plantronics' most stylish headset is also a solid, hands-free Bluetooth talker.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE](#)



Plantronics Voyager 520

\$99.95 direct



This older model is now a budget favorite, often selling for below \$50 on the street. The largish Voyager 520 exhibits smooth, punchy voice timbre in both directions. It also features killer battery life: A test model scored almost 9 hours on our talk-time rundown test. The 520 lacks noise cancellation, though.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE](#)



Range

There's not much variation in range of operation, except for the Callpod Dragon, which achieved close to 50 feet on our tests. Most headsets are limited to a theoretical range of 33 feet, which is a limitation of Bluetooth technology. Typically, you can go a good 10 to 15 feet before static starts to creep in.

Mono vs. Stereo Sound

Most Bluetooth headsets provide mono sound and fit in a single ear. But if you want to listen to stereo music wirelessly—say, for your workout—a few of the latest dual-ear models, like the MotoROKR S9-HD and the Altec Lansing BackBeat, are definitely worth considering.

Die-hard audiophiles, on the other hand, should stick with wired earphones for the best sound quality. But when it comes to pure convenience, it's tough to beat a stereo

Bluetooth set, especially since these models let you listen to your tunes and take calls from your Bluetooth-enabled phone.

Bonus Features

Depending on the device you choose, you can get one (or more) nifty extras. Some headsets, like the Plantronics Voyager 520, let you pair up to two devices simultaneously; that means you can switch between PC-based VoIP calls and cell-phone calls all day without pairing and re-pairing each time. The BlueAnt V1 lets you speak commands and gives you voice-based tutorials, and the Callpod Dragon has a two-way communication mode that lets you and a friend talk to each other while riding bicycles, for example. The Iqua 603 SUN, one of the more innovative headsets we've seen, integrates a solar panel that keeps its battery charged with the sun's rays. ■



Plantronics Voyager 835

\$119.95 direct



The Plantronics Voyager 835's effective noise cancellation, good sound quality, and easy fit make it an apt choice for an all-day, workhorse Bluetooth headset.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE](#)

Plantronics Voyager 510

\$99 list



An old favorite of ours, the Voyager 510 headset is an excellent companion for Bluetooth-equipped mobile phones.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE](#)

Samsung WEP700

\$89.99 list



The WEP700 Bluetooth headset offers crisp sound and sleek styling, but Samsung's noise- and echo-canceling claims are exaggerated.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE](#)



Solutions

Spring-Cleaning for Your PC

The origins of spring-cleaning are murky, but no one can argue with the concept. Every so often it's important to perform thorough cleaning and maintenance—even on your PC. *By David Cardinal*

Is your computer filling up with old files or slowing down, cluttered with applications? Just like your house, it likely needs a good spring-cleaning. Fortunately there are a few simple steps you can take and utilities you can use to clean up the debris that may be cluttering up your machine.

Clean Up Your Desktop and Start Menu

If you've been letting your desktop fill up, take 10 minutes to file away or delete the clutter. If you're using Windows XP and need to ease navigation in the Start menu, open the menu in Windows Explorer (C:\Documents and Settings\username\Start Menu\Programs) and spend a couple of minutes filing. Since Vista users have the convenient Start menu search field, straightening up the Programs menu seems like a waste of time.

Unclog the Pipes

One of the simplest steps you can take to help out your machine's performance is to defragment the hard drive—although, alas, test results show that the improvement achieved from defragging is uneven.

With a disk defragmenting utility built right into Windows, however, there's really no reason not to defrag. Doing this is as simple as right-clicking on the hard drive icon in Windows Explorer and choosing the **Defragment** option under **Tools**. Your computer may need to reboot to complete the work, so be sure to give yourself plenty of time to run the utility.

Defragmenting reassembles and rearranges files that have become scattered across the drive, thus ensuring that your computer can get to each file as quickly as possible.

72 OFFICE

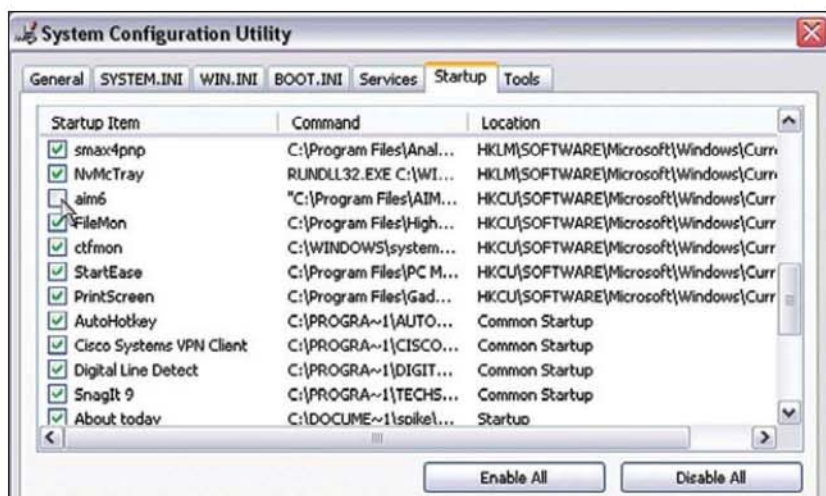
Take Outlook with you if you lose your job

76 SECURITY

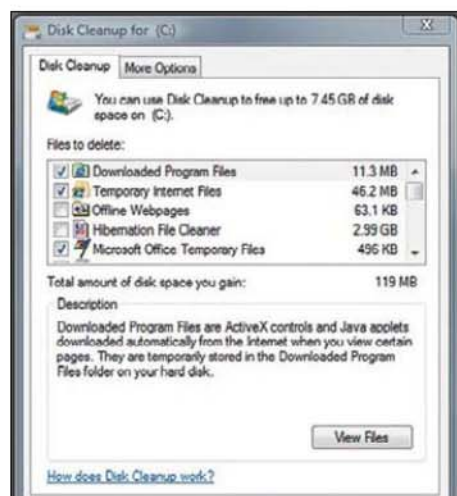
Know how to combat identity theft

78 TIPS

Useful tidbits from PCMag editorial staff and readers on Windows, the iPhone, printers, scanners, and more



TRIM YOUR NUMBER OF START-UP PROGRAMS You may be appalled to see how many programs load at start-up. No wonder it takes so long! The Windows System Configuration utility (msconfig) lets you selectively disable them.



CLEAN UP YOUR DISK Windows' disk cleanup tool lists different files you may not need anymore and can remove them for you, too.

Free Up Space

Next, free up space on your hard drive. Unused programs and especially services take up space as well as using computer processing time, and they can even slow your start-up. The first culprits to look for are any applications that start up each time you launch Windows but don't do anything you need.

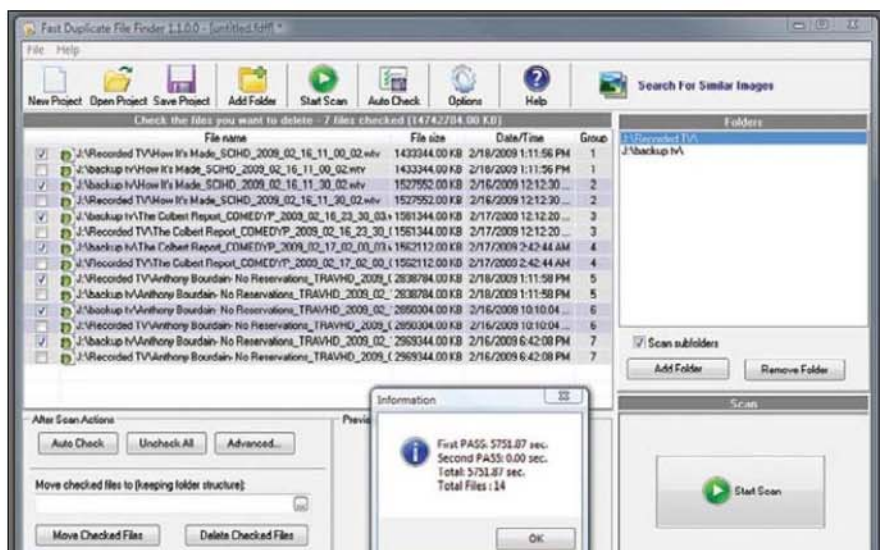
Once everyone learned to delete the application shortcuts in the Start menu's Startup folder, app developers got crafty. You can uninstall programs you don't want, but to disable start-up programs, you need to use the System Configuration utility. Click **Start | Run**, and type **msconfig**. Go to the Startup

tab and disable any apps you don't want running automatically. You can search online for unfamiliar names; we like the Process Library for this information. And do take a few seconds to research the names so that you won't disable a critical process.

Next, a trip to the Programs and Features section of the Control Panel in Vista or to the Add and Remove Programs item in Windows XP is well worthwhile. If you're the sort of person who has tried a number of programs, or even if you've just stopped using some of your older software, you'll find a gold mine of opportunity for cleaning up your system. Select and uninstall each of the applications you no longer use. In

FIND DUPLICATE FILES, FAST

If you've been a little sloppy about storing your media files or have used multiple media players and wound up with more than one copy, this free utility will scan your hard drives for any duplicates and allow you to delete them. Since it actually checks the contents of each file, it can take a very long time to run, especially if you have lots of large audio or video files.



general, if you're asked whether to remove shared files, it's safest to say no. They don't take much room, and if you remove them you risk breaking some other application.

It won't make your machine run any better, but if you hate staring at the runt entries left in the Programs control panel after apps don't uninstall correctly, then Microsoft's uninstall cleaner will get rid of them.

Eliminate Redundancy

If you find that you have duplicate or unused files, several utilities can help you remove them. The first one to try is built right into Windows. Disk Cleanup, accessible from your Programs menu under **Accessories | System Tools | Disk Cleanup** (or **Start | Run... cleanmgr**) will delete, among other things, the contents of your Recycle Bin, old downloads, temp files, unneeded system logs, and dump files, as well as helping you remove unused Windows components. Then, if your machine has more than one drive and your System drive (usually C:) is filling up, con-

sider moving some of your data files to your other drives. Remember not to move the applications themselves: They have to be uninstalled and reinstalled if you want them in a different location.

If you suspect you've wound up with multiple copies of large files like photos, music, or videos, there are utilities that can help you locate and delete duplicates. One nice free one is Fast Duplicate File Finder from Mind-Gems; PCMag utility Dupeless 2 is another good choice, though it's not free.

Finally, as long as you're getting your hands dirty, now's a good time to make sure you have a backup system and that it's working. See our article on the best backup tools to get some ideas on how to make sure your system is effectively archived.

Whether you take the time to go through all of these steps or just some of them, the time you spend on your system should more than pay for itself by ensuring that you have a better-performing machine for the rest of the year. Happy spring-cleaning, everyone!

The Physical Clean-Up: Get the Gunk Out of Your PC

If you opened up your PC chassis right now, you might be surprised to see a scary accumulation of sloughed-off skin, pet hair, food particles, insect parts, mold spores, and other disgusting nasties. This can reduce your PC's cooling efficiency, gum up mechanical parts, and prevent good electrical contact (or create it where it doesn't belong). Cleaning your PC and other valuable equipment isn't nearly as daunting as you think. **By Daniel S. Evans**



How to Clean Your Monitor

On an old CRT monitor, Windex or Fantastik might work, but on an expensive LCD, use a specialty cleaner. Invest a few extra bucks in the good stuff, because you can also use it on your HDTV (plasma or CRT), iPhone, and even eyeglasses. I use Surface, a cleaning agent made by consumer electronics company Audiovox.



How to Clean Your PC Chassis

You'll probably see a layer of dust covering most of the PC's enclosure. Use a can of compressed gas, such as Dust-Off, to blow it off the case and out of the vents. Don't turn the can upside down to get at corners, though—the container can get very cold very fast, causing the gas to spray everywhere.



How to Clean Your Fans

The fans within the case probably have a nice layer of dust on them as well. Just take a damp cloth and wipe them down. If you want, you can even add a drop of oil to the bearings in the middle of the springs while you're in there. Just make sure to pull the fan out of the case so you don't dribble lubricant on anything important.



Don't worry about the fan in your power supply—if you don't know what you're doing, taking a power supply apart can be bad news. Depending on the way your computer's case is set up, you might be able to use the air to blow some of the dust out, but don't aim directly at the fan blades. They may not be designed to move that fast and could break.

Finding “Exciting New Opportunities” with Outlook

It’s a sad fact that many people become ex-employees every year. If your business involves contacts and e-mail, backing up Outlook should be your number one priority. *By Bill Dyszel*

Nobody gets fired anymore. They “pursue exciting new opportunities.” Tens of thousands of people have recently joined that exhilarating quest. We used to call it “unemployment.” How quaint!

Seriously, are you ready to swing back into action if your job disappears or your employer suddenly closes? Don’t think of it as preparing to lose your current job—think of it as “preparing to seek exciting new opportunities.” In this economy, just about anybody might need a new opportunity, lickety-split, if only to keep up with the mortgage payments.

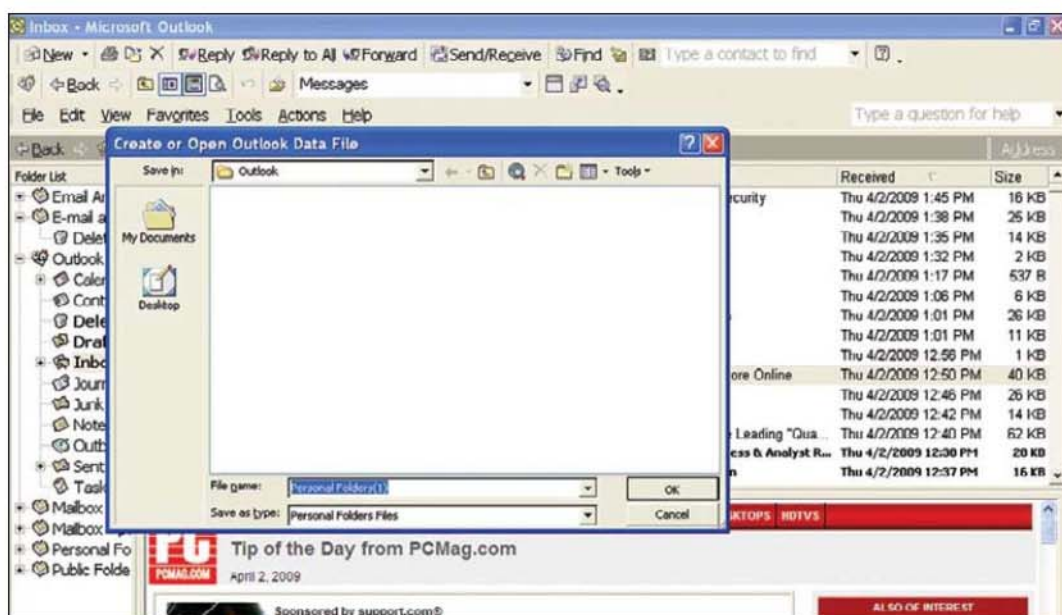
The ax can fall swiftly. Many terminated employees don’t even finish out the day of notification; most don’t complete the week. That’s normal—it’s nothing personal. But it leaves very little time to gather essential information for an upcoming job search. Ordinarily, an employee’s Outlook e-mail

account gets shut down abruptly at termination, cutting off information that would be valuable for a successful job search.

Networking is critical to finding a new job quickly, and your best networking connections are the people you’ve worked with recently. You need to be ready to capture your personal work information before you’re ever summoned to that “mandatory meeting.”

Your first step should be to stash away your own copy of your last month or so of Outlook e-mail traffic, along with as much contact information as you can gather. The fastest way to do that is to create a new PST file and copy messages to it by following these steps:

1 Choose **File | New | Outlook Data File**. The New Outlook Data File dialog box asks what Outlook PST version to create. (If you’re not running Office 2007, you won’t be offered a choice.)



CREATE A PST

FILE To save your Outlook data, start by creating an Outlook PST file in your My Documents folder.

2 Choose **Outlook 97–2002**. Outlook is upwardly compatible, so the earliest PST format should work with whatever version of Outlook you're using elsewhere. The **Create or Open Outlook Data File** dialog box appears. This is just like the **File Save** dialog box in other applications, and it does the same thing.

3 Create the new PST file in the My Documents folder (or someplace where you can find it). By default, Outlook creates its data files deep in the bowels of your file system. You need to find this one, so put it in a place you can remember. When you choose a location, the **Create Microsoft Personal Folders** dialog box appears.

4 Click **OK**. If your Outlook Folder List is open, the folder you just created will now appear. If the Folder List isn't open, click the **Folder List** button—the

leftmost button at the bottom of the Navigation pane.

5 Select the messages you want to copy, then right-drag them to your new personal folder in the folder list and choose **Copy**. You may not want or need to copy everything in your Inbox. Many people store tens of thousands of messages; copying them all will not only take a long time but will also result in an unmanageably large PST file.

To select just the last month or so, choose **View | Expand/Collapse Groups | Collapse All Groups**, then shift-click **Last Month** and **Today**. That will select everything since the beginning of last month. Also, don't forget to copy messages from your Sent Items folder. You can also group the e-mail by sender (recipient, in Sent Items) to capture all messages from or to specific people.



PERSONAL FOLDERS Once you've chosen a file location, you'll get this dialog box. Click **OK**.

6 Right-drag your **Contacts** folder to the new folder to copy your saved contacts, too. If you haven't saved contact information about people with whom you've exchanged e-mail, now's the time. If you right-click the name of the sender of an e-mail you've received from within the company and choose **Outlook Properties** from the shortcut menu, you'll see all the contact info that's been stored for that person. Click the **Add to Contacts** button at the bottom of that window to create a fully populated record in your **Contacts** folder. You can do the same thing in the **Global Address List** by clicking the **Address Book** icon in the toolbar and right-clicking any name.

7 Drag any other data you may need to the new folder, including **Notes**, **Tasks**, and so on.

8 Close the new folder by right-clicking it and choosing **Close [name of folder]**. Copy the PST file you created

to a location you can get at later. This can be an online file storage account, Gmail, a flash drive—you name it. Just save that information in a place you won't lose access to.

9 Find and copy the Autocomplete (NK2) file. This file is where Outlook stores the last 1,000 e-mail addresses you used. You may not need it, but it may be useful for finding people you've worked with lately. The extension is NK2, and it's usually located in `C:\Documents and Settings\user\Application Data\Microsoft\Outlook`. You'll need to get a utility to convert the data in an NK2 file: A free program called **NK2.INFO** will do the job nicely. Conveniently, you can find it online at nk2.info.

One word of warning

Once you get into the process of collecting data, you might be tempted to grab more stuff than you should. Don't take any



SEARCH YOUR INBOX Select the messages you want to save and copy them to your new folder.

information that would put you afoul of any laws, contracts, or rules about trade secrets or confidential information. It's important to keep your record clean if you expect to become a job seeker soon. Also, your company may staff up again someday and offer you an "exciting new opportunity," so you probably don't want to burn your bridges.

And remember, laptop users aren't exempt, so don't get complacent. If you have a company laptop, your Outlook data is stored on the Exchange servers at the company, so when your account gets shut down, you could lose that data, too.

There are other approaches to gathering much of this information. If you have a

smartphone or PDA that syncs with Outlook, you can pull in all of your contact info by synchronizing. You could also take advantage of the Outlook synchronization features of MigoSync Premium, an application you can buy for any U3-enabled flash drive. In either case, you'll need to go out and buy the appropriate hardware and software and make sure it works before the fateful day arrives. If your chosen solution flakes out, the steps above will work with no third-party hardware or software.

Once you've captured enough data, you'll be ready to get the networking going right away so that you can land on your feet with the least interruption possible. ■

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Identity Theft: Why It's Thriving

We trust online banks and retailers to protect our identities every day, yet the number of corporate data breaches continues to rise.

Here's what you can do if a business fails you. *By Matthew D. Sarrel*

Have you noticed that along with copious stories about the state of the economy, you're seeing more and more reports of crimes large and small? I'm talking about everything from shoplifting to Madoff-caliber Ponzi schemes. So is it any wonder that identity theft is thriving? According to Gartner, 15 million identities are stolen per year—which means a new victim once every 2 seconds. Given 15 million a year, in ten years every U.S. citizen who uses the Net will have had his or her identity stolen. Well, either that or one unfortunate person will have to suffer through filing 150 million claims.

The Nation's Fastest-Growing Crime

The identity theft incidents increased by 50 percent in 2008 from 2007, according to the Identity Theft Resource Center, and it continues to be one of the fastest-growing crimes in the United States. There is a thriving online international black market in stolen identities that local, state, federal,

and international law enforcement agencies seem powerless to stop. In fact, it has gotten so easy to steal and sell identities that prices for personal data have come down dramatically over the past two years. Why does it seem to be getting easier for the bad guys and harder for the good guys like you and me? Because your identity is spread far and wide around the Internet, and its protection is out of your hands.

Whom Can You Trust?

How many entities on the Web and in the real world have you entrusted with some aspect of your identity? How many online retailers have your credit card info?

Corporate data breaches are on the rise. The Identity Theft Resource Center's 2008 breach report reached 656 reported breaches at the end of 2008, reflecting an increase of 47 percent over last year's total of 446. In addition, ITRC estimates that only 2.4 percent of all the companies breached had encryption or other strong protection methods in use, while only 8.5 percent of

reported breaches involved surmounting password protection. If a company can't even password-protect access to our identities, does it really deserve our business?

Despite well-publicized thefts, business at companies that have been hit continues to thrive. Notification laws have proven thoroughly ineffective at *preventing* data breaches. Not only that, the next time you receive a notification letter—and odds are you will—read it carefully. Not a single one of the 50 or so letters that readers have forwarded to me mentioned concrete actions that the companies were going to take to prevent it from happening *again*. If that doesn't indicate how valuable they consider the safety of your identity, then I don't know what does!

Mugged by Merchants?

You can do everything possible to protect your valuable identity—and you will, because it's yours and you care—but after your info enters the ether, there are gaping holes in its protection. The holes are online retailers, banks, mortgage providers, ski resorts, hospitals, and even the government. And guess what? Companies and organizations care a lot less about protecting your identity than you do. It's time for that to change, and that will happen only when we hit them where it hurts, in the bottom line. The next time an entity allows your identity to be stolen, cancel or transfer your account. Don't shop there again. If you got mugged in a physical store, would you keep shopping there?

What to do when you are victimized by a data breach

1. Close your account. Send an e-mail explaining why and demand confirmation that your confidential information has been deleted from their system. If you can't simply close your account, as in the case of a bank or mortgage, transfer it to another provider. Make your original provider waive all cancellation fees and pay for the transfer. Unwilling to close the account? At the very least, have all related account numbers changed.
2. Cancel all affected credit and debit cards.
3. If the breached entity is the government, write to your local, state, or federal elected officials to make them aware of your displeasure.
4. Immediately call all three credit bureaus (Equifax, Experian, TransUnion) to place a fraud alert on your accounts and request free credit reports to review carefully.
5. Demand identity protection services from the breached entity.
6. Inspect all account statements on arrival.
7. Inform all friends, relatives, and acquaintances of the breach and encourage them to avoid the breached entity.



Tech Tips

Useful tidbits from PCMag editorial staff, Labs analysts, and readers

PRINTERS

Nozzle Decongestion

An unpleasant fact of life for inkjet printers is that nozzles can and do clog. Nozzles tend to clog more often in areas with particularly low humidity. That's not a problem at our offices in New York, but cities in desert climates often experience humidities as low as 10 or 15 percent.

If you live in area with low humidity and you're having a problem with clogging nozzles, you may be able to solve it by adding a humidifier to the room where you keep your printer.—*M. David Stone*

SCANNERS

Are Your Scans Taking Too Long?

Autofocusing is generally a desirable feature for a scanner to have; it ensures that the scanned image will be in focus. Because autofocusing requires multiple scans, however, with the scanner analyzing the results of each test scan, it can raise overall scan time significantly.

What's more, the extra analysis may not always improve the quality of the image enough to justify the time that it takes. If your scanner has an autofocus feature, you

might want to experiment with turning it off to see how much the scan quality actually degrades. In some cases, also, you can turn off the autofocus for preview scans only, while still keeping it active for the final scan.—*M. David Stone*

WINDOWS

Spice Up Your Good Old DOS Skills with a Dash of Windows

In response to the question "Is there a way to print all the filenames—just the filenames—in a folder?" Neil J. Rubenking wrote: "Navigate to the folder in question using your good old DOS skills." To make Neil's instructions even easier for repeated use:

1. Put the following two lines in a BAT file (I call it cd.bat):

```
cd %1
cmd
```

2. Put this file in your **Send To** folder.

Right-click on any folder in Windows Explorer and send it to this file. A command window opens, with the prompt already set to "the folder in question." (If you mistakenly select a file instead of a folder, a harmless

error message will appear.) This is handy for a variety of tasks, including the one Neil was discussing.—*Robert Kushler, reader*

MOBILITY

Upgrade Your Phone's Battery

If you've had your phone for more than a year you may be surprised at how much a new battery can liven it up. Under normal use, many cell-phone batteries begin to lose their charge somewhere around the 18-month point. Just make sure that you get a bona fide manufacturer's battery, as there have been several cases in the past of off-brand batteries melting or exploding.

—*Sascha Segan*

IPHONE

Tapping Tricks for Your iPhone

- Tap the Status bar at the top of the screen (where the clock usually is) to return instantly to the top of long pages.
- Hold a finger on a link in Safari to get a pop-up saying where the link goes.
- Tap the bottom left or right corner to scroll left or right.
- Tap with two fingers to zoom out in Maps.
- Drag inside text boxes with two fingers to scroll without scrolling the whole page.
- Double-click the Power/Lock button to send incoming calls to your voice mail.
- Double-click the Home button in any app to bring up the iPod controls. ■



Do You Need Gift Ideas for a Dad or Grad?

The experts at **PCMag** will help you find the perfect gift for your favorite dad or grad (And there's stuff for mom, too.!) The **Dads & Grads Gift Guide** is updated daily, so check back often.

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TheBe

DESKTOPS

MAINSTREAM

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Velocity Micro Raptor Signature Edition \$6,999 direct

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BUSINESS

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LAPTOPS & NOTEBOOKS

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MEDIA CENTER/ DESKTOP REPLACEMENT

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Acer Aspire 6930G-6723
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Dell Studio XPS 16 \$1,804 direct

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BUSINESS

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STORAGE

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PROJECTORS

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NEC VT800 \$1,000 street

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Samsung ML-2851ND \$150 street

COLOR LASER

Lexmark C544dn \$499 direct

STANDARD INKJET

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\$99.99 direct

ALL-IN-ONE INKJET

Canon Pixma MP980 Wireless \$299.99 direct

PHOTO PRINTER

HP Photosmart A636 Compact Photo Printer
\$149.99 direct

NETWORKING

Netgear Powerline Adapter Kit (XAVB101) \$130 street

SMC SMCGS8P \$300 street

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Vizio VP505XVT \$1,499.99 list

LCD

NEW Sharp Aquos LC-52D85U
\$2,099.99 direct

Samsung LN52A750
\$3,999.99 list

OLED

Sony XEL-1 OLED Digital TV
\$2,499.99 list

DIGITAL CAMERAS

COMPACT

Canon PowerShot A1000 IS
\$349.99 list

D-SLR

Nikon D300
\$1,800 street (body only)

Canon EOS Rebel XSi
\$699 list (body only)

SUPERZOOM

Panasonic Lumix DMC-FZ18
\$399.95 list

DIGITAL VIDEO CAMERAS

Creative Vado Pocket Video Cam HD \$299.99 direct

Sony HDR-SR11 \$1,099.99 direct

DIGITAL PHOTO & VIDEO

MULTIMEDIA SUITE

Adobe Creative Suite 3
\$999 direct

stStuff

VIDEO-EDITING SOFTWARE

NEW Cyberlink DVD Suite 7
Ultra \$129.95 direct

PHOTO EDITING

Adobe Photoshop CS4
\$1,150 list

Picasa 3 (beta) Free

DIGITAL PHOTO FRAME

Sony VAIO VGF-CP1 \$299 list

MP3 PLAYERS

HARD DISK

Microsoft Zune 120GB
\$249.99 list

FLASH

Apple iPod touch 8GB,
\$229 direct

Apple iPod nano 16GB,
\$199 direct

Samsung YP-U3 (2GB)
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Logitech Pure-Fi Dream
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GPS DEVICES

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NEW TomTom One 140-S
\$199.95 list

GADGETS

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CELL PHONES

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RIM BlackBerry Curve 8330
From \$229.99 with contract

AT&T

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RIM BlackBerry Curve 8330
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Samsung Memoir SGH-T929
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VERIZON WIRELESS

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HEADSETS

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HEADPHONES

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3G NETWORK ADAPTERS

SPRINT

Sierra Wireless 598U \$249.99 list

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\$449 direct

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Skype 4.0 Free

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SimCity 2009 (for iPhone) Free

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AntiSpyware 6.0 \$39.95 direct

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NEW Norton 360 version 3.0
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NEW Dropbox
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Quicken Home & Business 2009
\$79.99 direct

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Free

