



# ACORNUCOPIA

## AN ABUNDANCE OF IDEAS

### CEO Corner

#### In Business, as in Golf, Every Shot Pleases Someone

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I do not want to get into a debate as to whether the current thinking in Washington DC or Sacramento makes any economic sense, political sense or any sense at all. However, the machinations that our elected leaders are going through to try to correct economic woes and to stimulate our economy illustrate the critical role our economic system plays in the well-being of all of us and emphasizes in a myriad of ways the importance of the small business enterprise in our economic well being. Accordingly, I want to make some observations, based on my own economic bias, about how small businesses can prosper in these very difficult times.

To begin with, every customer is having its credit lines impacted and needs to conserve cash. Capital budget spending will be put on "hold." Only essential positions will be filled and underperforming employees will be "let go." Employees will value their job more because the job market is essentially on vacation. There will be stress at all levels.

Every vendor will want cash up front when it can get it but will not want to offend a longstanding good customer. The vendor will do deals and will discount for cash. Vendor inventories will tend to shrink and "just in time" will become "generally too late." More items will be backordered unless you want something that isn't selling well and there is a lot in inventory. There will be stress at all levels.

Now the good news: opportunities abound.

For instance, Acorn Technology Corporation offers an "outsourced IT solution." In other words, our product permits our customers to improve the quality of their overall

operation while reducing their costs. Administrative staff that, in the past, had to get a patch cable, arrange for a new printer, and find an IT service professional to handle a problem, are now free to focus on the core business processes to their company's success.

Workers who depend on their computer no longer have to wait to get service. They pick up the telephone and call Acorn and generally have the problem solved during that first call. They are able to get back to work and be productive sooner and avoid the stress often associated with not having a key tool available to them.

Data back-up and hardware redundancies reduce the down time should there be a hardware or software failure. This assures the business that it is available to service its customers when the customer needs the service.

These efficiencies lead to less staffing and reduced costs. Since we provide a fixed monthly price for these services, the cost is predictable and therefore fully anticipated. No surprises.

It is my belief that every company can find ways to make its product or service user friendly in these stressful times and thereby help its customers become more likely to survive and prosper. I believe to the extent technology plays a role in your product or service, Acorn wants to be your strategic IT partner.

Donald H. Dye  
President & CEO  
Acorn Technology Corporation

## What's New at Acorn?



With the acquisition of Forval International, Acorn Technology has become the sole provider of ElipServices™ in the United States.

The ElipSwitch™ is a proprietary device that can turn any USB printer and/or external hard drive into shared devices across a network. It also has the built in functionality of a firewall and router. This all-in-one device is the perfect solution for small businesses that don't want to invest in a server. Similar to a server, the ElipSwitch™ has the ability to set permission levels for shared data and thanks to Acorn's data center, we are able to have automated off-site backup for every ElipSwitch™ customer. Acorn is able to make all of this available for a small monthly fee.

My name is Patrick Edgett, a third year Economics/Administrative Studies major at UC Riverside. As the newest member of the Acorn team, my responsibilities include expanding sales and customer service as it relates to ElipServices™ and the ElipSwitch™.

In the short time I have been with Acorn, I have gone on sales meetings, completed site surveys and even put together a couple of proposals for future customers. Along with learning about our customer service, I have spent time learning the language of "IT". In an office surrounded by experienced technicians I found myself lost in conversations more than once. After asking many questions, many of which seem intuitive to technicians, I have become much more comfortable with my tech jargon.

I look forward to continuing to learn more about technology and ways in which I can help better serve our current and future customers.

Patrick Edgett  
CSR IT  
Acorn Technology Corporation

## Technology and the Presidential Election

George Allen was a shoe-in for re-election during his campaign for the Virginia Senate in 2006. That was until he made what was perceived to be racial slur at a cameraman during a campaign stop that was caught on video. 15 years ago this video may have never seen the light of day, but thanks to websites like youtube.com, it was viewed millions of times by users throughout the world. George Allen was not re-elected.

The Internet has revolutionized how information can be distributed. During the 2008 Presidential election, campaign managers were quick to build a presence on the web in hopes of garnering support. At the time of this writing, Barack Obama had 1,232,009 friends on myspace.com. This is significant as candidates were able to instantaneously communicate with their supporters via updates to their social networking sites, emails, videos and more. Additionally, a high percentage of the viewers of these websites are in the youth demographic, which has been hard to reach and effectively communicate with in past elections. While the exact impact of the Internet on the election would be difficult to calculate, it doesn't come as a surprise that our current President was also the candidate with the largest web presence.

Ryan Hoskin  
Customer Service Manager  
Acorn Technology Corporation



## Acorn Technology's VIC\*



*For this issue of the Acornucopia, Acorn Technology Corporation is pleased to highlight First 5 Riverside, Riverside County Children & Families Commission. First 5 has been a client of Acorn's for nearly 3 years and like most of Acorn's customers, First 5 was introduced to us by a referral source. Below is what First 5 had to say.*

Mickey McGuire  
 Director of Managed IT Services  
 Acorn Technology Corporation

First 5 Riverside, the Riverside County Children & Families Commission, is a public agency dedicated to helping children through age 5 develop a strong foundation for success in school and throughout their lives. Throughout Riverside County, First 5 Riverside funds child care, preschool spaces, school readiness, parent education, family literacy, and preventative, physical and mental health services. First 5 is funded by tobacco taxes generated by Proposition 10, which passed in November 1998 to help make sure that all of our youngest Californians, from prenatal to 5 years old, get the best possible start in life.

Acorn Technology helps our agency achieve its mission and goals by providing high quality information technology services that are above expectations and at reasonable prices. Since 2006, Acorn has provided us with a 24/7/365 full service IT department including: desktop support, management/maintenance of servers, network security and an automated offsite backup solution to their data center. Most recently, the company helped us redevelop our website, [www.rccfc.org](http://www.rccfc.org), and is now providing our web hosting. If you'd like a reference for Acorn's services, please feel free to contact us.

Jamie Ayala  
 Public Information Specialist  
 Riverside County Children & Families Commission

\* - Very Important Customer

## RSS Feeds

If you are anything like me, I tend to read a lot of news and blogs. I actively read around 10 different blogs and news sites. One new method of getting this information easier has been the invention of RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds. This allows news sites and blogs to let people use a reader to gather all of the information in one spot. RSS eliminates (for the most part) the need to visit each site by themselves. You no longer need to go to CNN.com, your friends' blog, a news site associated with cars it can all be read at the same place. To see if your favorite news or blog site uses RSS feeds, look for this icon.

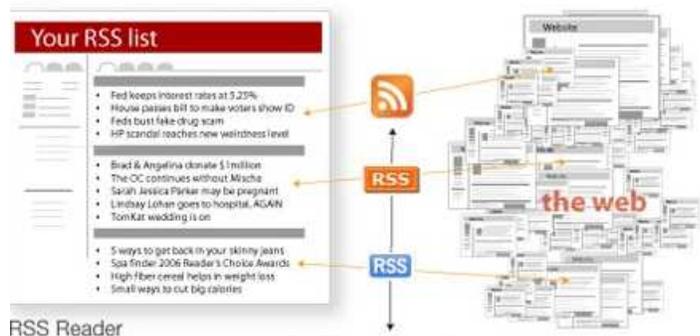


The only thing that you really need is a program that lets you subscribe to these RSS feeds. One such reader, which is the one I use, is Google Reader. Google Reader lets you subscribe to RSS feeds and using an interface similar to many email clients, you can read all of the news and blogs you want. It allows you to tell which ones have been updated to see which ones you need to read, it allows you to read and favorite a specific news/blog post, and best of all like most Google applications lets you search all of them for specific information. If you don't already have a Google account, feel free to visit <http://reader.google.com> and sign up for one (this will also allow you to create a Gmail account and use many other cool Google features).

Daniel Balkoski  
 TSR II  
 Acorn Technology Corporation

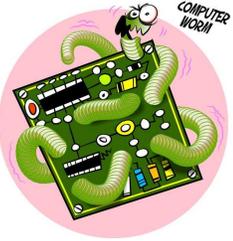
RSS is a way to get a quick list of the latest story headlines from all your favorite websites and blogs.

RSS makes it a lot easier and faster for you to get the stories you care about from around the web.



## Conflicker or Downadup Worm

The Conflicker worm has been in the news recently, spreading to millions of machines worldwide. The new breed of worms making the rounds on the Internet differs from those of yesteryear. While writing viruses and worms was mostly the domain of bored teenagers, newer worms are big business. Once a worm is installed on a computer, the computer becomes a member of a botnet, a large network of compromised computers, often numbering in the millions or tens of millions. Botnets are then leased to the highest bidder for such activities as spamming and denial of service attacks against companies that fail to pay a ransom. These worms are also more sophisticated than those in the past, spreading themselves via email, malicious websites, guessing passwords and copying themselves to media such as USB drives.



In response to the article below, Acorn Technology Corporation has a multifaceted approach to protecting its customers from worms and other security threats. First, all email sent to our customers domains is routed through a spam filter that also checks for viruses. Statistically, over 90% of the email sent to our customers is a spam or virus.

Second, local virus scanners on computers help guard against other threats, such as malicious web pages and USB drives that are brought in from outside the network. Finally, as patches for operating systems and applications are released, Acorn Technology Corporation evaluates them for criticality and rushes them to customers automatically so that they're protect against the latest

While Acorn makes an effort to protect customers as much as possible, end users can also help protect themselves against threats by always making sure to choose strong passwords that can't easily be guessed, surfing only trusted webpages, and not installing unnecessary software.

Together we can make sure you remain safe from security threats.

Andrew Motel  
Chief Technology Officer  
Acorn Technology Corporation

### "Worms Infects Millions of Computers Worldwide"

John Mark  
Published: January 22, 2009  
The New York Times

A new digital plague has hit the Internet, infecting millions of personal and business computers in what seems to be the first step of a multistage attack. The world's leading computer security experts do not yet know who programmed the infection, or what the next stage will be. In recent weeks a worm, a malicious software program, has swept through corporate, educational and public computer networks around the

world. Known as Conflicker or Downadup, it is spread by a recently discovered [Microsoft](#) Windows vulnerability, by guessing network passwords and by hand-carried consumer gadgets like USB keys.

Experts say it is the worst infection since the Slammer worm exploded through the Internet in January 2003, and it may have infected as many as nine million personal computers around the world.

Worms like Conflicker not only ricochet around the Internet at lightning speed, they harness infected computers into unified systems called botnets, which can then accept programming instructions from their clandestine masters. "If you're looking for a digital Pearl Harbor, we now have the Japanese ships steaming toward us on the horizon," said Rick Wesson, chief executive of Support Intelligence, a computer security consulting firm based in San Francisco.

Many computer users may not notice that their machines have been infected, and computer security researchers said they were waiting for the instructions to materialize, to determine what impact the botnet will have on PC users. It might operate in the background, using the infected computer to send spam or infect other computers, or it might steal the PC user's personal information.

"I don't know why people aren't more afraid of these programs," said Merrick L. Furst, a computer scientist at [Georgia Tech](#). "This is like having a mole in your organization that can do things like send out any information it finds on machines it infects."

Microsoft rushed an emergency patch to defend the Windows operating systems against this vulnerability in October, yet the worm has continued to spread even as the level of warnings has grown in recent weeks.

Earlier this week, security researchers at Qualys, a Silicon Valley security firm, estimated that about 30 percent of Windows-based computers attached to the Internet remain vulnerable to infection because they have not been updated with the patch, despite the fact that it was made available in October. The firm's estimate is based on a survey of nine million Internet addresses.

Security researchers said the success of Conflicker was due in part to lax security practices by both companies and individuals, who frequently do not immediately install updates.

A Microsoft executive defended the company's security update service, saying there is no single solution to the malware problem.

"I do believe the updating strategy is working," said George Stathakopoulos, general manager for Microsoft's Security Engineering and Communications group. But he added that organizations must focus on everything from timely updates to password security.

"It's all about defense in depth," Mr. Stathakopoulos said.

Alfred Huger, vice president of development at [Sy-](#)

*Continued on Page 5.*

## Online Acronyms and Shorthand

*Continued from Page 4*

mantec's security response division, said, "This is a really well-written worm." He said security companies were still racing to try to unlock all of its secrets.

Unraveling the program has been particularly challenging because it comes with encryption mechanisms that hide its internal workings from those seeking to disable it.

Most security firms have updated their programs to detect and eradicate the software, and a variety of companies offer specialized software programs for detecting and removing it.

The program uses an elaborate shell-game-style technique to permit someone to command it remotely. Each day it generates a new list of 250 domain names. Instructions from any one of these domain names would be obeyed. To control the botnet, an attacker would need only to register a single domain to send instructions to the botnet globally, greatly complicating the task of law enforcement and security companies trying to intervene and block the activation of the botnet. Computer security researchers expect that within days or weeks the bot-herder who controls the programs will send out commands to force the botnet to perform some as yet unknown illegal activity.

Several computer security firms said that although Conficker appeared to have been written from scratch, it had parallels to the work of a suspected Eastern European criminal gang that has profited by sending programs known as "scareware" to personal computers that seem to warn users of an infection and ask for credit card numbers to pay for bogus antivirus software that actually further infects their computer.

One intriguing clue left by the malware authors is that the first version of the program checked to see if the computer had a Ukrainian keyboard layout. If it found it had such a keyboard, it would not infect the machine, according to Philip Porras, a security investigator at SRI International who has disassembled the program to determine how it functioned.

The worm has reignited a debate inside the computer security community over the possibility of eradicating the program before it is used by sending out instructions to the botnet that provide users with an alert that their machines have been infected.

"Yes, we are working on it, as are many others," said one botnet researcher who spoke on the grounds that he not be identified because of his plan. "Yes, it's illegal, but so was Rosa Parks sitting in the front of the bus."

This idea of stopping the program in its tracks before it has the ability to do damage was challenged by many in the computer security community.

"It's a really bad idea," said Michael Argast, a security analyst at Sophos, a British computer security firm. "The ethics of this haven't changed in 20 years, because the reality is that you can cause just as many problems as you solve."

**Source: The New York Times**

[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/23/technology/internet/23worm.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/23/technology/internet/23worm.html?_r=1)

With the rise of texting and instant messaging, acronyms and shorthand has crept into the online lexicon. For those unversed in these abbreviations, acronyms, and chat lingo, it can be difficult to decipher their meaning. Following are a few commonly used shortened phrases, to help you out.



**ABT2:** About to

**AISI:** As I see it

**BBIAB:** Be back in a bit

**BBL:** Be back later

**BRB:** Be right back

**BTA:** But then again

**BTW:** By the way

**IDK:** I don't know

**IMHO:** In my humble opinion

**IRL:** In real life

**L8R:** Later

**LOL:** Laughing out loud

**NBD:** No big deal

**NP:** No problem

**NT:** No thanks

**NM:** Nevermind (variation: nvm)

**OIC:** Oh, I see

**OT:** Off topic

**ROFL:** Rolling on the floor laughing

**SU:** Shut up

**TY:** Thank you

**TM:** Trust me

**W/E:** Whatever (variation: wev)

**YNK:** You never know

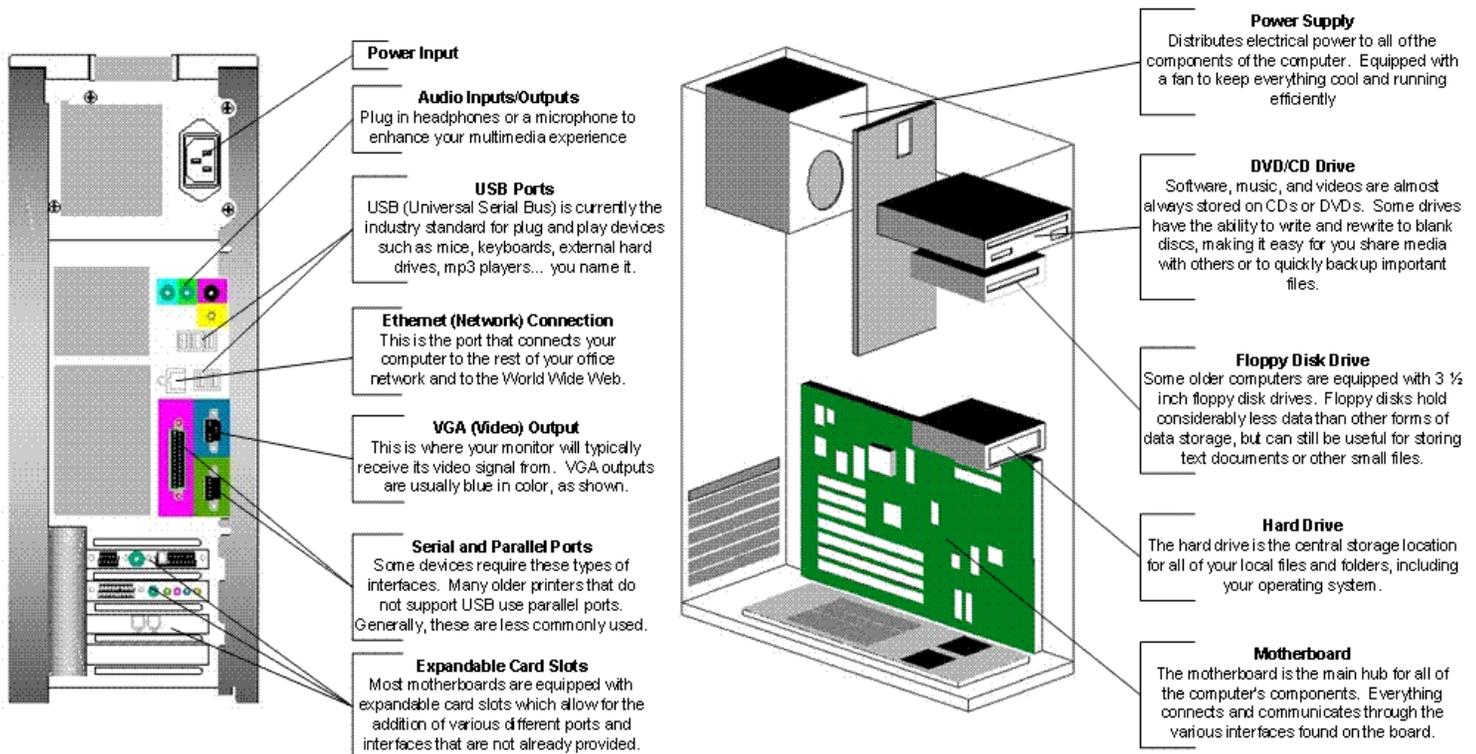
This is just a starting point: search the net for "chat acronyms" and you can find lists of hundreds more. In the long run, you might save precious keystrokes, but it admittedly takes a while to train your fingers (and mind!) to remember to type "PLZ" instead of "please." But at least you'll know what other people are texting about when they send you "ROFL!!!!" after you send them a picture of your sombrero clad birthday celebration.

Rachel Helwich  
Purchasing Manager  
Acorn Technology Corporation

## The Inner Workings of a Computer

Many people tend to get overwhelmed just at the sight of a computer, thinking that it might be too confusing to understand. In this diagram our goal was to break down the computer and its connections, so that you, as a customer, can understand what each port does and what purpose it serves. We also touch base on what is inside your computer and give brief descriptions on what to expect if you ever find yourself poking around in there. Hopefully this diagram will have given you some insight on the setup of a computer.

*\*\*\*Please Note: Contact Acorn Tech Corp before any attempt of repairing or opening computer hardware because not only are you in danger from electric shock but your equipment is in danger of physical damage. Thank you\*\*\**

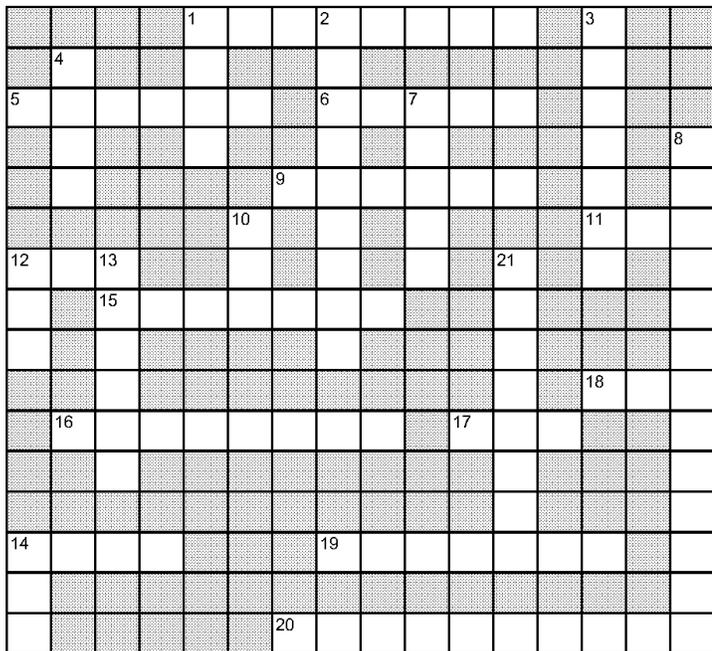


(Text)  
Elias Omar Guzman  
TSR IT  
(Diagram)  
Luis H. Lopez  
Graphic Document Specialist  
(Description)  
Thomas Dye  
TSR IT

**When in doubt, call Acorn Technology Corporation at (951) 784-3500**

Acorn Technology Corporation

## Acorn Tech Word Puzzle



### Provide an Article Topic for the Next Issue of Acornucopia...

Here at Acorn Technology Corporation we publish articles written by our staff members that highlight current technical trends and important aspects of technology that we think our customers are most interested in. If you or anyone in your office has a particular topic that you would like for us to include please e-mail us at [info@acorntechcorp.com](mailto:info@acorntechcorp.com) with your topic and we will do our best to publish an article that addresses your topic in the following Acornucopia issues. Also, if you have any other thoughts or comments regarding our newsletter and ways we can improve it, please contact us as we welcome our all of our customers suggestions.

Christine Dela Cruz  
Sales and Customer Service Representative  
Acorn Technology Corporation

We hope that you enjoyed reading the articles in this quarter's Acornucopia, but our newsletter would not be complete without a little fun. So we would like to treat you to an IT crossword puzzle. This puzzle will include words used in the newsletter and will put what you have read to a test! We tried not to make it too hard to solve, but if you would still like to see the answers, please turn to the bottom of page 2.

Have fun!

Danitza Lopez  
Install Coordinator  
Acorn Technology Corporation

#### Across:

1. Electronic device that is now seen in almost every office space
5. One of the most famous search engines
6. Current US president
9. The way in which Acorn attempts to handle most customer issues. Opposite of going out on site
11. Acronym for the memory programs that are running.
12. Acronym for a Plug and Play interface that is commonly used for peripherals such as mice and keyboards
14. Microsoft software used as a word processor
15. A program you used to access your email
16. Name of Acorn's email address used for customer's requests
17. Lingo used in Instant Messages, meaning "be right back"
18. Another name for an XML file also called a webfeed is a \_\_\_ Feed
19. Peripheral device used to produce a hard copy from data stored on a computer
20. Where Acorn backs up all data remotely. (two words)

#### Down:

1. Many rows and columns of this within Excel; one \_\_\_\_\_ out of exactly 18,481,152
2. The "brain" of a computer.
3. The system that allows multiple computers to communicate with each other
4. Malicious computer software that is designed to self propagate
7. The name of your outsourced IT department
8. The user account on a computer with the most elevated rights
10. Lingo used in Instant Messages, meaning "laughing out loud"
12. Acronym for device used as a battery back-up solution
13. A large network of compromised computers
14. Very famous acronym for the world wide web
21. A global network of interconnected computer