

# TOOLS of the TRADE



## Logitech UE Smart Radio

The Logitech UE Smart Radio looks like a conventional radio but plays streaming content from the Internet over your Wi-Fi network. That means you have access to countless Internet radio stations as well as Pandora, Spotify, and the other online services. You can even broadcast through the radio your music playlists and other content stored on your computer, iPhone, iPod, iPad, or Android smartphone. Compatible operating systems include Windows XP, Windows 7 and later, and Mac OS X 10.5 and later. PC music files supported are MP3, FLAC, WAV, AIFF, WMA, Apple Lossless formats, and more. The 2.4" color LCD screen shows album art and station information. There are six preset buttons that provide on-touch access to favorite radio stations and playlists. A built-in alarm

clock has seven days of settings. It has a six-hour rechargeable battery, so you can take the UE anywhere as long as you're within reach of your network.

The UE Smart Radio is 8.7" long × 5" wide × 5" tall. The speakers include a .75" HD, soft-dome tweeter, and a 3" high-power, long-throw woofer with digital electronic crossover. You can download a free Smart Radio Controller app for iOS and Android devices to transform your smartphone or tablet into a master music controller. [www.logitech.com](http://www.logitech.com)

## Jawbone Jambox

The Jawbone Jambox™ is a small wireless speaker and speakerphone that's ultra-portable and engineered for a powerful output. Jawbone is known for its Bluetooth headsets, and the Jambox is a logical addition to its catalog. It's compatible with most Bluetooth-enabled devices including iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch, Android smartphones and tablets, most Mac and PC computers, and any device

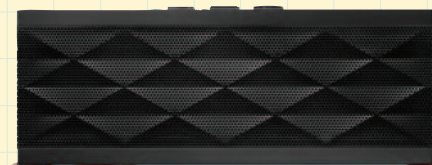
with a headphone jack or audio line out. When functioning as a wireless speakerphone for phone calls and video chats, the Jambox offers a built-in, omnidirectional microphone with echo-cancellation that's compatible with most Bluetooth-enabled devices. The speaker is small and solid—5.95" long × 1.57" wide × 2.24" high, and it weighs 12 oz. The sound is clean and full, created by proprietary acoustic drivers (stereo pair) and a proprietary passive bass radiator. There's an option called LiveAudio™ that processes the sound for what Jawbone describes as "an immersive three-dimensional listening experience." At the cost of some volume, the midrange is manipulated to create a more separated sound. Controls are almost invisible, with an on/off switch on the side next to the 3.5mm audio input plug and Micro USB. On top, there are three push buttons for volume

up and down and talk on/off. The built-in rechargeable lithium-ion battery will last about 10 hours of continuous play. There's a charging indicator on the speaker, and battery life is displayed on your iPhone. A wall charger is included for the speaker, along with a carrying case.

[www.jawbone.com](http://www.jawbone.com)

## Photoshop and Premiere Elements

The latest version of the best-selling consumer photo- and video-editing software, Adobe Photoshop Elements 11 and Adobe Premiere Elements 11, was released in the fall. With many of the traditional Photoshop tools built in, the photo-editing package has been improved with many new features that make using the Photoshop functions easier. There's a newly designed user interface offering three levels for editing your photos: Quick, Guided, and Expert editing modes. There are one-click choices that offer a selection of adjustments that appear as you click on the thumbnail that looks the best to you.



# TECH FORUM

## A Platter of Apps

By Michael Castelluccio, Editor

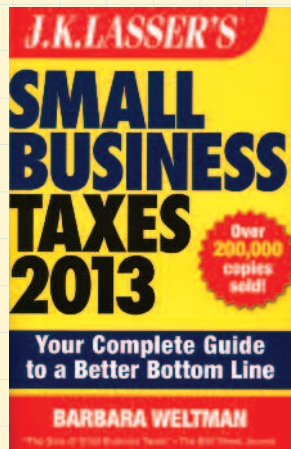


You can organize photos based on people or places (Google geotagging) and use professional effects like tilt-shift, vignettes, and high- and low-key. There are new filters and avenues to share photos via e-mail, Facebook, YouTube, Vimeo, and more. There's also a new interface with Premiere Elements 11 video editing and many of the same updates found in Elements. Effects include transitions, themes, titles, disc menus, and professional-level effects and sound. FilmLooks impart Hollywood movie styles, and you can add slow- and fast-motion effects, apply color control by using a slider, and use Quick Presets for overall adjustments. The two programs are available in one combined package or you can purchase them separately. [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com)

### Lasser's Small Business Taxes

The latest edition of J.K. Lasser's *Small Business Taxes 2013* is now available. The guide is written in a straightforward style, and the 610 pages are designed to be read easily. Sidebar notes offer alerts, warnings, and frequent examples. The guide is

presented in four parts: Organization (Tax Year and Accounting Methods, Recordkeeping for Income and Deductions); Business Income and Losses (Income, Capital Gains and Losses, Sales of Business Property); Business Deductions and Credits (Salary, Wages, Benefits, Travel, and 15 other categories); and Tax Planning for your Small Business (eight general issues and strategies). There's detailed coverage of the newest tax laws, court decisions, and IRS rulings, and there are sample forms and checklists to help you prepare for tax time. There's even advice on opening and closing a business, running a sideline activity, or multiple businesses. A free online supplement keeps you up on late tax changes. [www.jklasser.com](http://www.jklasser.com)



Traditionally, January is the time for reflection on the past year and maybe some prognostication about what's to come in the new year. So that no one is disappointed: In brief, this past year was the second year of the mobile revolution, and tablets and smartphones continued their advance deeper into PC territory with the allies (Wi-Fi, 3G/4G, and the Cloud) accelerating the advance. As for this year, expect more of the same.

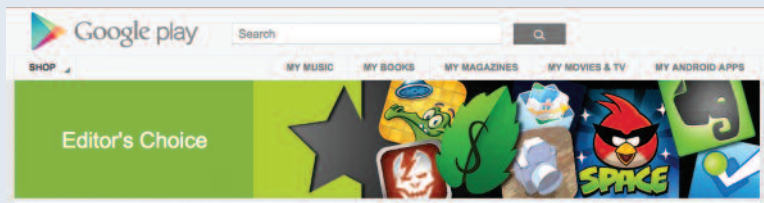
### SOMETHING OTHER THAN TOP 10

OK, with that out of the way, let's start the New Year with a few downloads for your phone or tablet. This won't be a top-10 or top-20 grouping because, to be frank, anyone who offers a top-10 list of apps is perpetrating something of a fraud. There are 700,000 apps in the Apple store, and, in October, CNET reported that Google has finally caught up and now offers 700,000 of its own Android apps in the Google Play store. Given the subjective appeal of these little programs, it seems unlikely there's a human anywhere who could narrow down a list of 700,000 (744,380 if you want the number as of this writing) to just 10 that are the very best. How would that person factor in the 709 new applications filed with Apple every day? And what should that frazzled arbiter do with the 264,523 inactive apps that are no longer available for download but are out there as part of the Apple legacy catalog?

Forget the 10 best. Consider the 20 or so apps suggested here as "possibly interesting." Some might have landed, at one time or another, on someone's top 20, but that would be nothing more than coincidence. The sole benchmark used here is that these apps have endured the relentless onslaught of inexpensive competition in the form of the flood of new apps, and yet they have somehow glued their icons onto the screens of my iOS and Android devices.

I need only two platters for these late holiday offer-

*continued on next page*



ings, one for iOS Apple and one for Android. And sorry if the anchovy cracker is right next to the almond crescent, but, as I've mentioned, these are just a random selection of a few things you might want to try if you haven't downloaded them already.

### TAKE A FEW

Two of the very best qualities of app software are that usually there are no EULAs (End-user License Agreements), and the price is often better than right—as in “free.” In the list that follows, “A” next to the price listed stands for Apple App Store, and the “G” indicates an Android app ([play.google.com](http://play.google.com)).

Mobiles usually let you type or talk when inputting. **SwiftKey 3** (G, 3.99) has won numerous awards including “the most innovative mobile app.” Google calls it the world's smartest touchscreen keyboard. It corrects typos and missed spaces as you type and predicts the next word, displaying possibilities above the keyboard so you can tap instead of typing the whole word. It has great interface choices, and it supports 42 languages. If you prefer speech input for queries and commands, Apple has **Siri**, and Android has **Google Voice**. If your mobile is an Apple, download Google Voice and test it against Siri to see which you prefer. Both are free.

The second thing users do, after checking e-mail, is get the news. News aggregators will pull together many print sources into a personal collection that's delivered as a daily news magazine with the sections you put together. Three of the best of these are **Flipboard** (A, G, free), **Pulse News** (A, G, free), and **Zite** (A, G, free). When you download these, you set up a version with your sections from any number of publications, and then you learn to use the flip and slide navigation memes.

There are hundreds of calculators, but I've narrowed it down to three. **Calculator HD for iPad** (A, .99) has a beautiful interface, can create a tape to save or e-mail, and functions as four different calculators. **MyScript Calculator** (G, free) is a neat little program that lets you write arithmetic problems with a stylus or your finger, which it then converts to print with solutions, fractions, square roots, and all.

When you want a powerful search engine that specializes in

math and facts, there's **Wolfram Alpha** (A, G, 3.99). This one can solve calculus equations as well as provide a long list of what happened on the day you were born, including the weather. Wolfram calls it a computational knowledge engine.

**TextGrabber + Translator** (A, 4.99) takes text you've photographed on your iPhone and converts it to digital with OCR. With an online connection, it can translate that ominous sign you photographed in more than 40 languages. The **Shop Savvy** app (A, G, free) photographs barcodes and then connects you to many other retail sources and prices.

Use Wikipedia a lot? **Wikipanion** (A, free or 4.99 for Plus) formats Wikipedia articles for mobile devices, and the Plus will download and catalog articles for reading later, offline. An app called **Wiki Encyclopedia Pro** (G, .99) works in a similar way for Android.

I spend an inordinate amount of time trying out word processors for tablets and mobiles. There are office apps like **Documents to Go** and **Office Suite Pro** that can provide standard work documents, but better are the word apps designed specifically for mobile screens with touch interfaces. **PlainText-Dropbox Text Editing** (A, free or 1.99 without ads) offers a very clean interface, no cluttered toolbars, and easy editing and sync with your Dropbox Cloud account. If you prepare text for your website, **UX Write** (A, 14.99) not only handles large, complex documents with tables, illustrations, and indexes, but it supports HTML and PDF formats for direct export of Web content and convenient e-mail attachments. And then there's **Daedalus Touch** (A, 4.99). The developers call it the Post-PC era text editor. Remember that “desktop” promised by the PC people, who then forced you to learn to navigate your desk's directories, folders, files, and formats? **Daedalus** has stacks of paper you manipulate by touch and a host of other smart ways of recreating working on paper. Another bonus is that **Daedalus** will format your work as an epub that can be saved on your iBooks library shelf and read and shared as an epub book.

Two quick closers: **TuneIn Radio** (A, G, free and Pro .99) offers the whole spectrum from police bands around the country, international music and talk, podcasts, and more. **Pandora** (A, G, free and subscription) just keeps improving. If you don't know how Pandora works, the app creates music stations based on favorite artists or songs you provide its search engine.

Appy New Year. **SF**