

William Bradberry / Shutterstock.com

### In this issue...

How will artificial intelligence affect the future?

The hack you never saw coming

4 Apps to Simplify your Day-to-Day

Are you safer with smart gadgets?

3 simple hacks to speed up your smartphone

## How will artificial intelligence affect the future?

At the box office, AI is typically spun as an evil entity. AI is without mercy and initiates justice as “it” sees fit.

Remember *I, Robot*? Released back in 2004, *I, Robot* followed hundreds of robots designed to protect everyday citizens as they coordinated a sophisticated rebellion to better “protect” people. To these intelligent machines, protected people means controlling society and sacrificing basic human rights.

And you surely can’t have missed movies like *The Terminator* and *The Matrix*, both of which presented the total dominance of mankind through a lethal blending of well-built machines and advanced artificial intelligence. The finale of both series involved wide-scale war with what little remained of mankind.

But what can’t be missed with any movie exhibiting AI in a negative light is that it’s usually a direct outcome of mankind’s curiosity. *How smart can we make machines? How far can we take technology?* This mentality will typically lead to advanced technology that ultimately turns on humans—but is this closer to reality than we think? According to some of the most influential technology pioneers such as Elon Musk, Stephen Hawking, and Bill Gates, this might be so.

But don’t hustle to throw out your smart gadgets just yet because [OpenAI](#) plans to reduce the potential threats AI could potentially present. This nonprofit organization was initially funded with over a billion dollars in donations from a handful of high profile investors. These donators would include tech giants such as Elon Musk (popular for his work in the automotive and space industries), Sam Altman (a 28-year old Stanford dropout who has influenced

companies like Dropbox, Airbnb, and Loopt), and Peter Thiel (co-founder of PayPal and Facebook’s first outside investor).

In the upcoming future, OpenAI plans to be the leading research institution working towards the betterment of artificial intelligence. A former research scientist from Google, Ilya Sutskever, who worked on the Google Brain Team for three years and founded DNNresearch, will lead this nonprofit organization, and all OpenAI researchers and scientists are “strongly encouraged to publish their work” willingly with the entire world.

The ultimate goal of OpenAI is to “prioritize a good outcome for all over its own self-interest” and “to advance digital intelligence in the way that is most likely to benefit humanity as a whole, unconstrained by a need to generate financial return.” In other words, OpenAI was created to encourage positive AI applications and to help thwart a wide-scale robot takeover.

OpenAI is in the primary stages of development. In fact, the nonprofit’s website consists solely of a blog posted on December 11th, so don’t expect to see anything significant come out of OpenAI for a while; however, know that when you do, it should be something ground breaking.

### Sources

<http://www.cs.toronto.edu/~ilya/>

<http://www.cnet.com/news/silicon-valley-bigwigs-fund-artificial-intelligence-nonprofit/#ftag=CAD590a51e>

<http://screenrant.com/artificial-intelligence-movies-evil-computers/>

<https://www.openai.com/blog/introducing-openai/>



R.legosyn / Shutterstock.com

## The hack you never saw coming

Once upon a time, browsing the internet and avoiding malware was a relatively simple task. All you really had to do was be on the lookout for sketchy websites. And even then, when you did land on a sketchy one, you would only panic for the half-second it took for you to click the back button. After that, your blood pressure would teeter back off to normal levels and all would be right with the world.

Until now.

Introducing Malvertising—the malware that poses as a legitimate ad and can affect your computer with no clicking or downloading necessary. This nasty form of malware can be found on any website (not just the sketchy ones). In fact, in 2015, many popular websites were unwitting hosts to Malvertising—including sites like Yahoo, Reuters, The Daily Mail, Perez Hilton, CBS Sports, Yahoo, and eBay.

If you're not panicking yet, then just wait.

What makes Malvertising so vicious is that it can infect your computer with no action on your end. All you have to do is visit the host site. So, in theory, if you visited the UK website, Daily Mail, in October of last year when they were infected with Malvertising, you may have been subjected to a drive-by download, which exploits outdated software or apps to infect your system with a virus. If you had actually clicked on the ad, you would have been exposed to an unpleasant form of ransomware called the Angler Exploit Kit.

According to Wired Magazine, Malvertising is considered a “sweet

spot” for many cyber criminals because it yields great returns and is almost entirely anonymous. It yields great returns because it is a direct line of attack that most people won't be able to recognize, and it is almost entirely anonymous because the ads rotate quickly and can be purchased through illegitimate means such as stolen credit card information (which means it's nearly impossible to trace).

Now the question you should be asking yourself right now is how do I avoid Malvertising? And you may not like the answer. You see, the only way to proactively avoid this form of malware is to always keep your system up-to-date—this includes your anti-virus, as well (something you should already be doing) and this requires you to work a little.

If you don't allow automatic updates to your browser, operating system, or security solution, then you need to make sure you proactively seek out updates on a continual basis. Think of it this way: Updates make your system whole. When you miss or postpone critical updates, you create holes in your system that grow bigger each day. These holes serve as entry points for hackers and cyber criminals.

### Sources

<https://blogs.mcafee.com/consumer/drive-by-download/>

<http://www.bbc.com/news/technology-34541915>

<https://nakedsecurity.sophos.com/2015/10/19/malvertising-meets-the-daily-mail/>

<http://www.cio.com/article/2948133/malware/malvertising-reaches-record-levels-in-june.html>

<http://www.wired.com/insights/2014/11/malvertising-is-cybercriminals-latest-sweet-spot/>

## 4 Apps to Simplify your Day-to-Day

### Laundry Day

Have you ever noticed how absolutely unintelligible the laundry symbols are on the tags of your clothes? A square with two lines on the upper left corner, a cup of water with four circles, and a triangle with an 'X' through it. What does any of that actually mean? Laundry Day would like to show you. Scan your tag, and this app will display any associated symbols, as well as a straightforward description of what each one means. Simple enough.

**Device:** iOS 7.0 or later

**Price:** \$0.99

### Photomath

Do you struggle with your children's math homework? If you do, you're not alone. Photomath is the smart camera calculator that strives to eliminate your after-work struggle. Scan a problem in your child's math book and instantly receive the answer, as well as step-by-step instructions on how to reach the answer.

**Device:** iOS 7.0 or later, Android 4.1 or later

**Price:** Free

### Evernote Scannable

Do you find that you gather too much paperwork throughout the work week? Paperwork you need, but isn't exactly critical enough to constitute a hardcopy? This is where Evernote Scannable would like to step in. This innovative app allows you to scan any documents into high-quality images. You can share or save these images in your photos, through Evernote, in a message, or via email. Quickly organize your child's class announcements, any business cards, and all those product flyers into one, easy-to-find archive.

**Device:** iOS 8.0 or later

**Price:** Free

### Cudasign

Are you tired of waiting days to receive a signature on a crucial document? Or maybe you're the guilty party... procrastinating for weeks before signing and mailing important documents? Cudasign is the simplest way to sign, seal, and deliver all those documents awaiting a signature. This app allows you to add electronic fields and data validation into any uploaded document and then to share it with trusted parties via email. Easy to archive and extremely secure, Cudasign is the highest rated e-signature app on the market.

**Device:** iOS 8.0 or later, Android 4.0 or later

**Price:** Free to download, receive up to 5 free signed documents per month

# Are you safer with smart gadgets?

Towards the end of last year, a professor in Australia was sitting in his office at the Charles Darwin University where he worked. He lived in a farm miles away from the university, and his land and home were connected through a variety of smart gadgets. He had previously installed cameras around his land that he could view remotely from his smartphone, and the video currently streaming to it was of a fire minutes away from engulfing his entire home.

While he was too late to save his crops, he still had an opportunity to prevent his home from going under. He switched to another app connected to his irrigation system and remotely turned on his sprinklers, saving his home from a fiery fate.

While this may seem like a commercial for smart sprinklers, it's a true story and an interesting one at that. Consider all those smart things available to the public right now. While many of these items are intended to make life simpler or more entertaining, they also have the ability to do so much more.

## SimpliSafe

This portable, no contract, Wi-Fi connected alarm system has been called a better, smarter way to secure your home by CNET security experts. SimpliSafe is a smart gadget that will save you, your family, and your home from intruders and people meaning to do you harm. Equipped with everything you'd find in a normal alarm system, SimpliSafe can be installed by yourself in less than five minutes. If you move, you can simply detach your hardware (since there are no wires included) and take it with you to your new home.

You can easily add to your setup—

motion detectors, keychain alarms, additional window sensors, and even gun safe or liquor cabinet monitors. Any activity is reported directly to your phone via a connected app, and you can turn your alarm on or off through the app, as well. SimpliSafe comes to you free of an annual contract and with instant intrusion detection and access to your local police department—all for about \$25 a month. Can't beat that.

## Nest Protect

You can own the smartest carbon monoxide and smoke detector for only \$99. It isn't that much more expensive than a traditional detector but you receive so much more. Nest Protect can be controlled and monitored via your smartphone and a connected app, and it uses advanced Split-Spectrum Sensors to detect particles of smoke more efficiently.

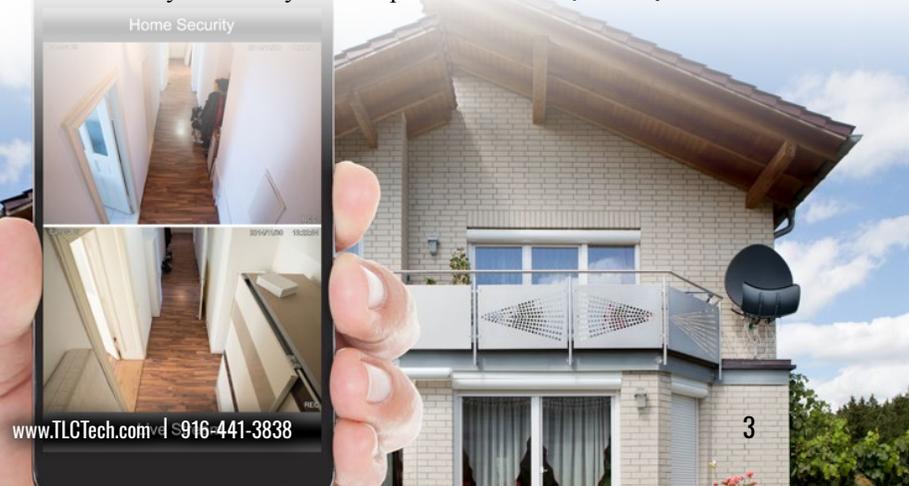
This smart gadget speaks to you, as well. Whether you have one Nest or four, they all speak in unison to inform you of impending danger—so even if you're in the upstairs bedroom, you'll be politely informed of the smoke in the kitchen. If you're cooking and the burned chicken sets off the alarm, you can turn off the alarm from your phone. No more hustling to open up windows or wildly swinging a broom in the air.

Nest Protect also knows the difference between smoke and steam, it can moonlight as a nightlight, and it will notify your phone weeks before it needs a new battery—so you can forget all that obnoxious chirping. And if in the future you decide to install more smart gadgets from Nest, they will all work together to keep you and your family safe from intruders, fires, and dangerous situations.

### Sources

<http://www.digitaltrends.com/home/smart-home-just-saved-fire-sorta/>

<http://www.engadget.com/2015/11/29/australia-bushfire-home-phone/>



# 3 simple hacks to speed up your smartphone

If you're not there yet, then you probably will be at some point in the near future—in a position where your shiny and expensive smartphone moves slower than a slug on a hot day.

When you first purchased your phone, you were in awe of how fast you could transition from one app to another. But now, things just aren't the same.

So how do you get back to where you once were? How do you rediscover the phone you once had? Well, apart from a complete factory reset, there are a few simple hacks that you can try. Here are a few to get you started.

## So many apps, so little space.

Your home screen is prime real estate. There isn't much of it, and many of us prefer to use every square inch of it. Apps, folders with apps, and widgets crowd your home screen, making it look busier than the DMV on a Monday morning. And all this clutter makes your phone run slower than it should; therefore, take a few minutes to decide what apps and widgets you truly need just a tap away. Do you really need to open up your Amazon app with one tap, or will two taps be just as sufficient?

## Update that phone.

Updates are beneficial for a variety of reasons. They give your phone more security, better options, and increased efficiency—and the last benefit is the reasoning behind this category. When you increase efficiency, you typically increase the overall speed of things; therefore, it's crucial to scan for updates every week or so. Updates normally don't take more than a few minutes and can be found in your settings.

## Do you actually use it?

Have you ever downloaded an app thinking it was going to be the most magical app ever and that you'd use it every day? And then, when you opened the app, you quickly realized how lame it was and never touched it again? You probably have... multiple times. Well, all these extra apps floating around inside your smartphone take up space and may even force your phone to participate in unnecessary background tasks. So depending on whether you're a serial app downloader or not, you should purge unwanted apps every two to four weeks.

There are many other things you can do to speed up your smartphone like clearing your cache and deleting all those thousands of screenshots and photos. If you'd like some more phone-boosting tips, check out [this site](#) for Androids and [this one](#) for iPhones.