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Entry Level Programmers Are Not Trained To Do Basic Tasks

Universities and Trade Schools Do A Dis-Service

As new software tools are rolled out to enterprises, many are making the same startling observation. Entry level programmers DO NOT know how to do basic tasks.

In the next few months 500MHz processors will be available and there will be added pressure to develop new applications for desktop users. The temptation to hire new "bodies" to code is great, unfortunately this could be a huge mistake.

I've concluded that our universities and trade schools are doing a poor job in providing necessary programming resources. If you recall, these are the same institutions that lowered reading and math scores by whole grade levels in the last two decades.

In a recent survey conducted by PSR, it was evident that the problem was caused by inadequate training by unqualified instructors. Our survey also found that 1 out of 5 instructors had never been employed as a commercial programmer. As a matter of fact, most graduates immediately took positions as instructors, and have yet to acquire a programming position. In a similar review of trade schools, we found that instructors were more experienced; however, in looking at their backgrounds few were "successful" programmers. Maybe the old adage, "those who can do and those who can't teach" is very true in the industry.

With the demands placed by the "new age"

Microsoft Has Given Netscape New Life As The Case Drags On

Netscape Has Stopped Losing Market Share But Beware

The trial that was only going to take a few weeks has droned on for several months and the end is no where in sight. So much has changed in the market, and it is not clear how the government intends to add any value to this situation.

Microsoft's beta program for its next generation browser, IE 5.0 is moving ahead and looks to be extremely promising.

All of the users that we have talked to are very pleased with the product. There have also been comments from several individuals that "Microsoft has finally got it right."

With that in mind, one can only wonder what the Justice Department is going to accomplish. So far only two things worth noting have occurred. First, law firms on both coasts are making money hand over fist and receiving great year-end bonuses. Second, the

market continues to value Microsoft as a national resource and Netscape as a high flying Internet company. One thousand dollars invested in either company last year has more than doubled.

What is happening in the browser market? The one that the government was so concerned about.

In our on-going Browser Market Share Study we find that the war of attrition has begun. Currently, Microsoft's IE browser market share remains at a steady 55% to 58%. Over the past twelve months IE has remained the most widely "used" browser. However, IE market share peaked at 62.35% in early June and after a slight drop has remained around 57%.

In September of 1997 IE's share was 40.5%



**The economy is great - right?
Then why are so many jobs
being lost each month???**

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100% Recycled Paper

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systems, there is a high demand for "new types" of programming skills. We have all heard radio ads that tell how you can earn \$50,000 to \$75,000 as a programmer. One ad in particular that recently aired in Southern California said that in order to "profit" from the information explosion you had to enroll in their program. That is one of the reasons why companies will pay a premium for experienced programmers. With the emphasis on objects and event driven events, there is limited knowledge on how to 'batch' process. Let me give you some background on this problem.

Not too long ago, I asked one of my programmers to read a set of files and then output the files to a "parsed" data format that could be used in a specific application. Unfortunately, this simple request proved to be extremely overwhelming for this individual and could not be completed without assistance. This programmer is an SQL expert training to be a data base administrator and Visual Basic programmer. His undergraduate degree is in IS and he had taken four Visual Basic programming classes. I assumed that my request was a task that could easily be accomplished.

Looking at some of the more basic elements of design, little is taught that has pragmatic application. Ask a programmer how a business problem will be solved and what you get is a technical synopsis of what they can do, not how they can solve the problem. Often, the first response is "Why would anyone want to do something like that?"

In researching this article I reviewed over two dozen text books that are used by major universities and trade schools. It became clear to me that all of the training is focused on obtaining certifications not meeting user requirements.

The question that we must ask ourselves is, what are we going to do to change this? One quick answer is to pay for experience and never overpay just because you need a "body" to do some coding. If we continue to do this, we will all pay in the end. ☹️

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while Netscape held the higher share of 56%. Now, Netscape's browser is only used by 37.72% of the browser market.

IE Leads - but loses momentum

Starting with less than 8% of the market in September of 1997, Microsoft's IE 4.0 continues to maintain a 37.36% market share as Netscape 4.0 slowly increases its market share to 26.13%.

As the new year begins, Microsoft's assault on Netscape continues. IE 5.0 is about to be launched and it will be a trial by fire to see if Netscape will be able to retain market share.

IE 5.0 promises lots of great new features and we predict that users will flock to it faster than anyone anticipated. One "KILLER" feature is storing passwords. I do not

know if you are like me, but I have so many passwords from so many different sites, I have had to create a database to maintain the list.

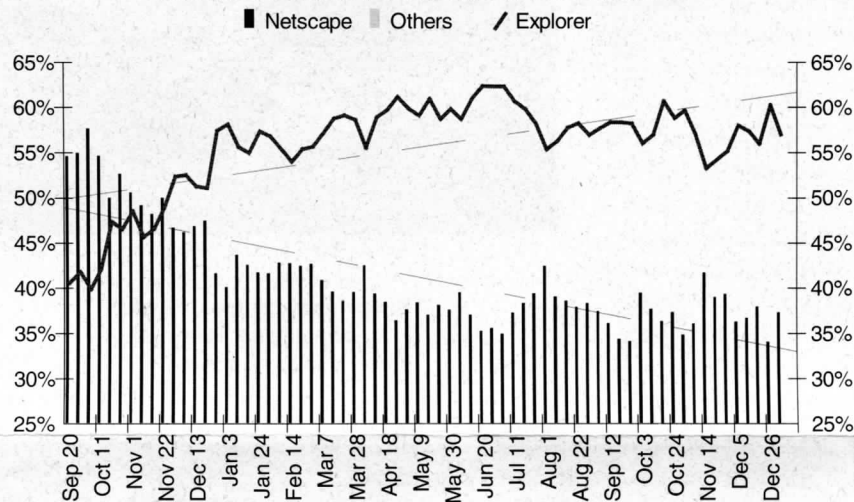
With IE 5.0,

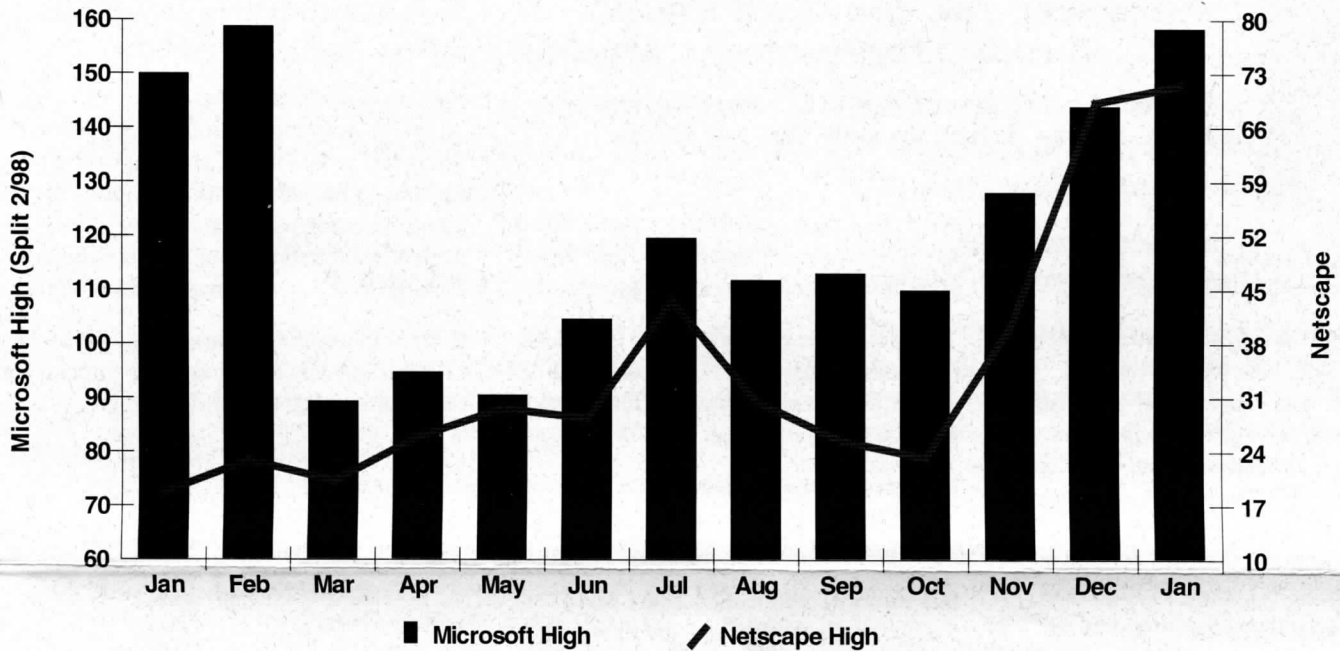
passwords for desired sites can be saved by following the appropriate steps. Gone is the requirement to remember the user id and password assigned by the site or picked from the air at the moment you first log on to a system.

This feature will cause many enterprises to question this breach in security. However, we spoke with several users who love this new feature.

On the downside, once users adopt this feature, many will forget the user ids and passwords needed to visit these sites. In addition, I know there will be some enterprising

Market Share Percent - IE vs Market





programmers out there who will figure out how to mine this data.

That is one bridge that will be crossed after one or two horror stories surface. Another area of concern will be users who have multiple systems. How will they be able to use the "environment" they have developed on one system and move it to another?


Aside from these problems, it is clear to me that the lead Microsoft has today will be expanded as the new version of IE makes it to the street.

What all of this means is that Microsoft is guaranteed to increase in value. Netscape, however, will be in a great position to be acquired.

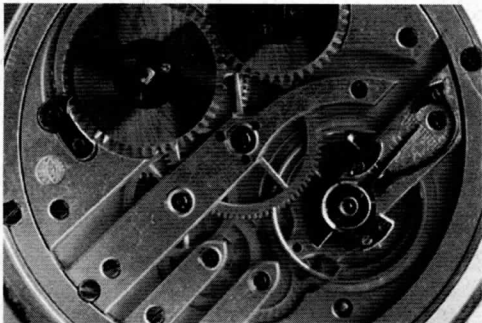
As a matter of fact, it is not too far fetched to think that

someone like IBM will be the one that does the acquisition. I hope this is not the case because we all need "several" strong competitors to continue to push Microsoft.

The company can not continue to grow at the pace it has been without absorbing the total gross national product of the country.

As you can see from the chart above of the past twelve months of high values of stock prices, Microsoft and Netscape are both on the fast track to skys above. What does that mean for the future - I have Microsoft stock -- Do you? 

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Forecast for the National Information Technology Market

Wanted - Experienced IT Professionals who know what needs to be done

by M. Victor Janulaitis
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Over the past few years there has been a major change in the way software is developed. Ten years ago, if you asked a Fortune 1000 organization what the development environment was they would have said COBOL and CICS. Today, aside from Year 2000 projects, the answer is Visual Basic, JAVA, C+, HTML and other "new age tools." Today, COBOL and CICS are considered the horse and carriage of IT.

In addition, many of the individuals involved in the new environment lack the discipline associated with the "old ways" of doing things. It is a common occurrence for a Project Manger working with these tools to be unfamiliar with System Development Methodology, Change Control, Version Management and Performace Measurement.

Enterprises can not find individuals with the right skills. Instead, they hire "bright young faces" who should be able to think their way out of problems. I say, "fat chance they will succeed."

In one enterprise, the head of IT, a 33 year old MBA, admits that he does not have the experience or knowledge necessary to drive the systems development and implementation processs. This MBA, from

a top ten East Coast school, told us that he has never seen a "case study" that deals with the types of problems he faces daily.

This is a classic example of an IT manager that does not have the IT "experiential maturity" necessary to cost effectively manage the IT resource.

With many enterprises downsizing, positions and individuals essential to IT have been eliminated.

In a recent IT publication, there was a feature article that defined the future CIO (Chief Information Officer) as being someone with an "understanding" of IT and an MBA. This only exemplifies the fact that too many are discounting experience.

Based on what we have seen, this attitude is not limited to the IT function. Many enterprises fail to realize that a single "star" can not make the organization a success. For example, the average Stanford MBA graduate is being offered startling salaries in excess of \$120,000 per year.

Last year the number of university students who enrolled in IT based courses continued to decline. In many MBA programs there is no requirement for IT courses. It's a fact that the demographics are changing.

There is a decrease in the number of new workers entering the job market.

New skills and new technologies are often driven by new entrants into the job market. What this points to is a pending explosion of demand on people with the right skills. In a recent compensation survey we conducted, we found that our PSR benchmark for large IT organizations exceed \$320,000.

It is not unusual for salaries to go up by 15 to 20% per year. This means the forecast for the IT profession is as follows:

1. New skilled workers will be harder to find.
2. Experienced IT professionals will see compensation increases that are greater than any time since the 1960's.
3. Attrition will increase as new approaches force organizations to aggressively recruit experienced resources.

As long as the economy continues to move along, IT is the best place to be. But buyer beware, there will be many who say they know something and do not. You may be left holding the bag if you fail to properly evaluate them.

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Location	Prospects Short Term	Prospects Long Term
Northeast	Excellent	Good
Mid Atlantic	Excellent	Good
Southeast	Good	Good
South	Good	Excellent
Midwest	Excellent	Excellent
Southwest	Good	Good
West	Excellent	Good
Pacific Northwest	Good	Excellent - Good
Best Location	West - Midwest	West - Midwest