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105 Year Old Ordered To Kindergarten

There Is More Than Y2K - We All Face Other Poor Computer Design And Implementation Issues

According to a story by Associated Press a 105-year-old was ordered to school. This is a classic example of a program that only uses the last two digits of the year. In this case the birth year chopped a century off his age. The man, along with 65 5-year-olds in the town, received a letter ordering him to start school.

According to estimates, Y2K is expected to cost the world up to \$5 trillion to fix. That estimate does not include the cost of attorneys who are staging to sue everyone for anything that even smacks of Y2K.

Stories like the one above will be written over the next few months. Though they are interesting, they are only the tip of the problem. As organizations start their fiscal year 2000 in the next few months we will start to see how well IT departments and enterprises around the world have dealt with this set of problems.

However, there are several other problems of equal magnitude. They are all driven by our dependency on computers and related technologies. They include:

1. **Area Code / Phone Numbers** expansion to support additional numbers needed by cellular phone, faxes and internet connections
2. **Global Positioning System Satellites** date rollover
3. **Euro Currency** conversion of systems to support the new common currency
4. **Social Security Numbers** addition of a digit or change to alpha characters

"Programmer-less and Operator-less" Tools

Zinnote Is A Featured Player at GIGA's Emerging Technology Conference

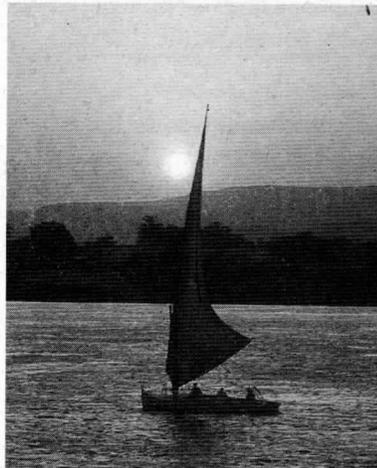
Santa Monica, CA - M. Victor Janulaitis, CEO of PSR, recently announced that Zinnote® v 5.6 was chosen as one of only 5 products to be demonstrated in "The Amazing Future of the Desktop" at the "Emerging Technology Scene," hosted by GIGA Information Group, Inc. Being

selected a "Featured Player" at the prestigious event, PSR is recognized as a leading and innovative technology company. The Showcase will be held December 7-9th at the La Quinta Resort in Palm Springs.

The Emerging Technology Scene is a unique form where selected vendors demonstrate their products before CIO's, Directors of IT, and IT investment and money mangers. At the conference, high level executives have an opportunity to see the most

significant products and technologies that will impact the market in early 1999. Not only will the audience see demonstrations of important technology, they will also have the opportunity to voice their impressions about the featured products through polls and evaluations.

Zinnote is a cross platform data integration and reporting tool, which lets users generate data rich documents with both graphical and tabular reports that can be published electronically without any operator or programmer assistance. Zinnote is a 32-bit application and carries the DESIGNED FOR WINDOWS® 98/NT, and DESIGNED FOR WINDOWS® 95/NT logos.



This Sail Boat Will Not Have A Navigation System In August 1999

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Area Code / Phone Numbers – Trigger Date NOW

In the Southern California area there used to be three area codes. Now, the Los Angeles area alone has seven. The plan is to have over one dozen in Southern California. New area codes seem to pop up weekly in the same metro area. One of our mailing lists, in a single six-month period, had over 20% of its phone numbers changed because of new area codes.

Usually, a new area code is a minor annoyance, necessitating minor costs in reprinting stationery and business cards. In about 10 years, the number of phone lines needed will exceed the capacity of a three-digit area code with a seven-digit phone number. One solution is a five-digit area code and a nine-digit phone number to allow up for to a trillion individual phone lines — enough for several phone numbers for every person on the planet.

It has been estimated that about 25 million software applications will need to be fixed to handle a new phone number format. The programs that will need to be changed will not be limited to computers. They will include everything from e-mail systems to telephone and “auto dialing” devices.

Global Positioning System Satellites - Trigger date August 21, 1999

This network allows anyone with a Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver to pinpoint his or her position on the Earth to within about 330 feet. In addition, the clocks on these satellites are used by many computers to determine the “TIME” an event occurred.

For example, GPS dates are used to synchronize some electrical power plants and large international transfers of funds. The rollover might cause some plants to quit working, and interest payments on the transfers could be thrown off.

For instance, if it takes a second to transfer \$100 Million between two banks in different countries, the interest could be a hundred dollars. But if one of the enterprises, relying on the GPS satellites, hasn't planned for the date rollover, its computers could think the transfer took 20 years. The interest could be off by billions of dollars.

The satellites use the elapsed week count to account for variations in the earth's orbit and rotation. Earth-based receivers not reprogrammed to handle the rollover could have problems determining the location and time.

The satellites keep track of dates by measuring the

number of weeks elapsed since Jan. 5, 1980. Every 1,024 weeks, the timer resets to zero - that will occur at midnight Aug. 21, 1999.

Now if all of these satellites change to the right date at the same time there is no problem. But if only one fails what will the ramifications be? How will it be fixed and at what cost?

Euro Currency – Trigger date 1999-2004

The European Monetary Union will begin its conversion to the Euro currency Jan. 1, 1999, and union countries are scheduled to phase out national currencies by 2004.

Instead of changing every date in a computer system with a single deadline looming, computer systems have to be able to handle the different ways the 11 union countries change over. Further complicating the problem are individual companies that may convert completely to conducting business in Euros, or they may continue to track their national currency while simultaneously using the Euro.

Social Security System - Trigger Date Mid 2050's

The United States will run out of social security numbers by the middle of the next century. The problem arises because of the way the government assigns the numbers.

Numbers assigned to U.S. citizens are not reused once someone dies. The current nine-digit system provides a maximum of about 1 billion numbers. Since 1936, when the first number was issued, more than 400 million numbers have been assigned, with about 6 million new ones issued each year.

As immigration increases and the dependency on the social security number expands this will become more of a problem. It needs to be addressed now, but no one is addressing this in a major way.

It's easy to add a digit or to allow alpha characters, but thousands of computer programs that expect nine-digit numbers will have to be modified. The other option is to reuse numbers. That is less viable because of the “control” issues that could arise in systems that depend on the fact that each social security number is unique.

The solutions are varied, but the cost of any of them far exceeds Y2K.

We are now a society that is totally dependant on technology. As problems like these are uncovered, we will all have to be ready to make changes in the way that we deal with implementing solutions. The real kicker in all of this is the legal profession. As Newt Gingrich said in his exit speach at GOPAC, no society can survive if they have a segment of the population that is only interested in how it can profit by punishing those who are trying to solve these problems.

As we move forward, one measure of the greatness of our society and use of technology will be how we deal with these vultures of society. 

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A common use of Zinnote is by sales managers tracking monthly, weekly, and even daily sales figures. The software can automatically update reports, so managers can see what's happening in their organization at any time. Reports specific to individual salespersons can be e-mailed to a predetermined list, and summary reports can be forwarded to the corporate office or even published on the WEB. Some of Zinnote's major features are:

Scheduler

The scheduler for Zinnote has the option to run as a service on NT workstation, NT Server, Windows 98 or Windows 95. The user can schedule:

- ◇ Updating of charts and reports based on links to virtually any data source
- ◇ Exporting of updated reports to MS Word or HTML
- ◇ Automatic electronic distribution of Word generated documents via e-mail to individuals or distribution lists
- ◇ Direct publishing of HTML generated pages to an Intranet or the Internet.

User Data Query Wizard

A data query wizard empowers the user to generate complex queries of various data sources. Zinnote generates SQL statements that can be transparent to the novice user or modified by the expert user. Users can join tables, generate complex AND/OR statements and summarize information by:

- ◇ **GROUP BY DAY** – Summarizes this field by the date so all 02/03/1999's are a single result for the day.
- ◇ **GROUP BY MONTH** – Summarizes this field by the date so all 02/1999's are a single result for the month.
- ◇ **GROUP BY YEAR** – Summarizes this field by the date so all 1999's are a single result for the year.
- ◇ **SUM** – Summarizes all like records to a single result.
- ◇ **COUNT** – Counts all occurrences of this field.
- ◇ **AVERAGE** – Calculates an average (mean) for this field in the result.
- ◇ **MIN** – Places the minimum value found in the result
- ◇ **MAX** – Places the maximum value found in the result.

Data connectivity

The user can map to traditional PC based data sources such as Excel spreadsheets, dBase, FoxPro, Paradox, Btrieve, Informix, Access and text files. In addition there is full connectivity to all ODBC and OLE DB data sources like Oracle, SQL, Sybase, and DB2.

Network traffic is kept to a minimum since 'snapshots' of actual data and table structures are contained in small Zinnote objects. Actual data can be updated by the click of a mouse or by a scheduled event using the scheduler. At that time Zinnote opens the data source and updates the charts/tabular reports as well as the data link objects.

The user has the option to "re-link" to different data sources so that Zinnote can use the same processes for multiple databases.

Once a data link has been created the actual data can be exported to a comma-delimited file that can be used by other applications on the user's desktop.

Output Formats

The exported Word output from Zinnote is in Word 95 or Word 98 based on the version of Word that is installed on the machine. All of the charts and tables are fully editable within Word and can be "cut and pasted" as vectored images into all Windows 95, 98 and NT compliant applications.

The exported HTML output complies with the HTML 4.0 standard and the images are in JPEG format. As a feature, the images, as exported, can be various scales from 125% to 25% of a full page.

The user has full control over formatting landscape or portrait pages for output. Zinnote automatically re-scales charts on the fly.

Charts

The user is given the option to do statistical presentations of information including graphing and calculating means, best fit, standard deviations, minimums, and maximums. There are over 160 chart and chart sub-types supported.

Earlier this year, Zinnote version 5.1 won the prestigious "BEST OF COMDEX - Best Productivity Software" award at COMDEX/Spring 98. PSR makes its software available to everyone on a twenty-day trial basis. Go to: <http://www.zinnote.com>. You can download the program from the site. We suggest that you use the Install from the Web option.

In addition, there are some other sources for the reader on the site including past issues of the Harvard Business Review on Critical Success Factors and some of the past issues of PSR Review that are available on the Internet. 



Forecast for the National Information Technology Market

There is a way out of the shortage of IT professionals without depending on H1Bs.

by M. Victor Janulaitis
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No matter where you go or who you talk to there is a constant droning on the fact that there are not enough IT professionals to do all that needs to be done to achieve management's objectives.

Congress reacted to pressure from special interests and passed an expansion and extension of the H1B visa program. That is not a solution, it is a band aide that only defers the problem. Just like the Social Security funding, which congress pushes into the future, they are not looking for a solution just a quick fix.

There are a number of problems inherent with the H1B program that are going to be worse than the cure. First, according to the program an individual can only get two (2) such visas in their lifetime.

That means we only get use of these resources for six (6) years if they work for the same company and less if they change jobs. At the very least in 2004 or 2005 we will LOSE 100,000 to 200,000 highly skilled workers a year to our competitors in Asia and Europe.

Second, as we lose these resources we have not created the infrastructure

necessary to train individuals to replace them. With all of the programs that we have for educating our population, the National Teachers Association should look at being a driver for getting programs in schools so our students have the skills needed to compete in the next millenium. Rather, they are focused on fighting the school voucher program.

Projections by the Census Bureau are that the number of individuals who are over the age of 55 and working will be at the LOWEST level ever in the United States. One of the reasons is our tax laws are such that older workers are punished with higher taxes if they chose to work.

What I would propose is a plan in which senior citizens that have the skills we need, such as IT, be given a credit for the contribution that they provide to our society. It could be structured as:

1. No payment of FICA by the employee and employer since all of these individuals typically are already at the maximum contribution for amounts and quarters paid. This would reduce the effective tax rate for the individual and encourage enterprises to hire seniors. If John Glenn can go into space, why can't an ex-

programmer work on programs using the latest tools.

2. No penalty on the Social Security payments that they receive because they earn an income. The current system raises the effective tax rate for individuals who work and contribute to society. If they do not work, they are paid for it. That sounds like the old Soviet system, and we all know how well that worked.
3. Provide the individuals and employers in this class with the ability to contribute an amount equal to the FICA payments into a Roth type of IRA with no limitation. This would encourage some who do not have a good retirement program to create one. This would be a boost to the economy as those funds would be invested in our economy, raising the overall savings rate.

There is logic for this, since typically people who work are NOT in need of subsidy from the government for health insurance. Companies providing insurance relieve the burden on Medicare and Medicaid - the major component of the of the revenue short fall of the Social Security program. ➡

Vic

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