THE OMNI USER

2021 Midwest Road, Suite 200   Oak Brook, IL 60523   The OMNI Line - (630) 953-6312

Monthly Dinner Meeting
Tuesday, January 20, 2003

Introduction to Webfacing: A Practical Example

Are you thinking about extending your existing iSeries applications to a web browser? Are you just getting started? This session will guide you through the options and demonstrate (including source code and configuration) how to leverage your existing resources with your existing skills or Java. Regarding WebSphere, this session will sift through the complexities of the product line and find a direct path to extending your applications with WebSphere. The pros and cons of each Websphere option will be discussed as well as other options such as CGI, Net.Data, and some business partner offerings.

Dave Money is the e-business Practice Leader at Andrews Consulting Group. Prior to joining Andrews, he was a member of the IBM AS/400 division's Partners in Development program and thereafter, Vice President of e-business for an AS/400 consulting firm. He has spent the majority of his career designing and developing e-business solutions and has worked with clients in a variety of industries to transform their businesses into e-business. He is an IBM Certified Solutions Expert and Solutions Designer, frequently published author, and a medal winning COMMON speaker. He has taught and developed courses on AS/400 Internet enablement, and speaks frequently at industry events and user group meetings.

Dave assists clients in assessing their e-business and Web based potential, and forming implementation plans to make the journey to e-business as smooth and profitable as possible. His specialties are enterprise application integration, Internet enablement of AS/400 applications.

Please reserve online at ….

www.omniuser.org

Reservations for Dinner MUST be received by Noon on Thursday, January 15, 2003

The web site is now our preferred method of resrving for the meetings. Alternatively, if you **must**, you can call **(630) 953-6312**, and leave your company name, the names of those attending, and whether any special (vegetarian or fish) dinners are required.

This month's menu:
Starter Caesar Salad
Entrees (your choice of one)
Chicken Picata - Grilled boneless chicken breast with white wine, lemon juice and capers served over pasta.
Orange Roughy – Orange Roughy served with Rice Pilaf and Chefs choice of vegetables.
Pasta Primavera – Seasonal vegetables tossed in a clear garlic broth with Linguini Pasta.
Dessert New York Cheesecake

If you must cancel your reservation…
If your plans change at the last minute and you cannot attend (that never happens in our business, right?) the procedure is the same. You can call us (630-953-6312) to cancel or, the best way to cancel is to use the WEB. Click the register button, leave your name, company name and in the phone number field, enter "Cancel". That's all it takes! No penalty, no problem. Please help us with this so that we can provide you with the best possible meeting accommodations. Thanks!

Dinner Meeting Cost:
$25 Member/Student, preregistered
$30 at the door
$40 Non-Member, preregistered
$45 at the door
   Cash or Check, Please. Credit Cards accepted online only.
   Late arrival (post-dinner) $5 Member, $20 Non-Member

Directions to the Embassy Suites Hotel

Our monthly meeting is located in Lombard, on Butterfield Road between Meyers Road and Highland Avenue. An easy on/off at I-88's Highland avenue exit, then turn north on Highland, east on Butterfield to one block east of Yorktown Mall, then south at Technology Drive.

Welcome to OMNI 2004!!

Now that the crunch of the holiday season is behind us, we can focus our attention to prospects for the New Year. Fresh with all those New Year's resolutions, why not resolve to take advantage of more of the educational and networking opportunities that OMNI provides?

OMNI's iSeries system has arrived, so we can look forward to the startup of new hands-on programming SIGs in 2004. What do you want to help with? Websphere, Apache, Webfacing or something else? Please let us know and get involved!

January's meeting brings us Dave Money from Andrews Consulting on "Webfacing: a practical example." This will cover the pros and cons of several alternatives with practical coding and configuration examples. Many of us have seen Dave speak at Common. He's an IBM Certified Solutions Expert and Solutions Designer, frequently published author, and a medal winning COMMON speaker. He has taught and developed several courses on AS/ 400 Internet enablement, and speaks frequently at industry events and user group meetings.

January also brings a new OMNI Board of Directors. We have a great slate of new and returning candidates that will be elected at the meeting. So please come to the meeting and let your vote be counted. Don't forget, there is still time to be included in the slate of candidates. We would love to have you on the 2003 Board of Directors, so contact any board member for more information.

In February, UCCNET will be presented by Lansa. In April – OMNI's Annual Spring Day of Education at IBM Oakbrook Terrace.

The recent Sunday Tribune reported bright spots emerging in the job market for 2004. The Tribune is reporting that IT is coming back. "It's a misperception that companies have completed all the upgrades they need to avoid obsolescence. It's not a technology industry recovery. It's a more diversified, cross industry recovery that is relatively consistent across the country, primarily for development and infrastructure positions."

The paper quoted a company as saying "We are starting to see the economy looking up. We have seen a slight uptick in attrition, which means it is looking better for employees. It is getting a little tougher to recruit and people are starting to have more alternatives."

Hopefully everyone can look forward to a prosperous 2004!
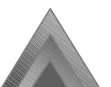
OMNI Board Elections

Happy New Year!

Elections for the OMNI User 2004 Board of Directors will be held Tuesday, January 20th during OMNI's monthly dinner meeting, which will include the topic "Introduction to Webfacing: a Practical Example" presented by Dave Money of Andrews Consulting.

What better way to make your mark in 2004 than to be part of the exciting OMNI User Board? If you are interested or know of someone who would like to get involved and help make 2004 a great year for OMNI, please contact one of the OMNI board members so we can add another candidate to the great slate below. OMNI board member info is at
http://omniuser.org/board.html

Ron Boris - Independent Consultant
Jean Dietsch - Independent Consultant
Ray Frazer - Daubert Industries
Matt Gross - Independent Consultant
Jerome Hughes - Independent Consultant
Yomi Kuforiji - Hub Group, Inc.
Bill Lorimer - Arbor Solutions
Paul Nelson - Arbor Solutions
Dale O'Leary - sitebuilder.org
Bill Parks - Vienna Beef
Sal Stangarone - mrc
Joe Thompson - IBM Corporation

Write-in nominations from the floor will also be accepted prior to the elections. There are 12 board positions to be filled, and 10 nominees currently. If more than 12 candidates are nominated, balloted voting will occur. The top 12 candidates will be elected to board positions, and the rest will be invited to take non-voting Advisory positions alongside those who have already volunteered for Advisory positions.
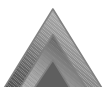
Please attend the meeting and show your appreciation for the work and involvement the new board members are committing to on your behalf.

Thanks,

—Jean Dietsch, OMNI 2003 President

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Education from COMMON

Does Your Job Title Matter?

By Tom Huntington

"What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet."
—William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet

Over the years, there have been many debates in the business world about job titles. Some radical managers have suggested that everyone in the company should have the same title—something generic like customer service representative. Others get hung up on job descriptions with well-defined boundaries and swear that the person should do only what the description says. But beyond theories, job titles are important to us. My neighbor stopped by recently and asked if I'd heard he gotten a promotion. Since I hadn't, he was quick to tell me, "I am now the Senior Manager of IT Infrastructure." I said, "Wow, what a great title." And that got me thinking about job titles.

New titles reflect new responsibilities
Ten years ago, I thought many traditional titles would disappear. The Operator would give way to the Operations Analyst, the Operations Supervisor to the Automation Administrator, and the Systems Manager to the Automation Manager. Because I work for a company that specializes in operations automation software, I may have a different viewpoint, but it seems to me that the titles of many of our long-term customers haven't kept pace with what they actually do. I think we need new titles that reflect the new reality.

We used to talk about the day when people would be running their computer systems lights-out. Lights out meant no one in the computer room from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m., while still running night batch processes and serving nighttime users. Many customers have achieved this definition of lights out, but their titles are still Operations Supervisor or Lead Operator. If you've automated to this extent, hasn't your job changed? Shouldn't your title change, too?

Change has been earned
If you run a lights-out shop, you are the Automation Manager. You've probably spent the last several years determining how to automate various processes and implementing this automation. Today you maintain a totally automated environment. We hope you've also earned a place at the management table so that whenever new computer hardware and software are evaluated, you make sure it can be run by your automated system.

A few years ago, Wayne Madden, Editor of *iSeries News*, spoke at Help/Systems' annual user conference. He said, "Those who know how to run and deploy computer systems better than the rest will be the ones that are most successful in their careers in the next decade." Isn't that true? Most IT shops buy software and hardware today instead of developing it internally. This means IT spends more time integrating and implementing technology. And, those who know how to automate will be the most successful of all.

Titles can be roadblocks
Tape and paper mounts are certainly major hurdles to overcome on your journey to lights-out operations, but another roadblock exists under the radar. The job titles

assigned to people can be a roadblock. For example, traditional titles such as Operations Supervisor or Operator don't sound like the people who are responsible for automation. Perhaps the biggest hurdle is the title Operations (or Operator) Supervisor. The title implies the goal of the position is to manage more operators. More people equal more power in the traditional thought process. In contrast, the title Automation Manager implies increasing productivity—doing more with the existing head count.

In an ideal world, the Automation Manager's job description would focus on automating any process that requires human intervention. The goal is not to reduce staff but to be able to do more with less. The title by itself communicates to other parties inside and outside of the organization that automating computer systems (and maybe even other parts of the business) is this person's specialty.

There is no question that mission-critical applications must be automated. It is simply too risky and costly to continue to run these types of applications in a manual mode. Whether the application runs on a mainframe, Windows, Unix, Linux, or OS/400, it must be automated. The wonderful thing is that the Automation Manager's skills learned on one platform are transferable to another. Once a person has implemented a job scheduling product, he or she will be able to do it on another platform. Among Help/Systems' customers, for example, we have seen many mainframe production control schedulers successfully transition to using Robot/SCHEDULE in the OS/400 environment.

**Transition is a good time to make changes**

When a major transition, such as moving mission critical applications from a mainframe to OS/400 takes place, it is a great time to change department and job titles, too. Production Control Specialists and Operators should become Operations Analysts or Automation Administrators.

Operations Analysts do most of the day-to-day work with the automation software. They soon learn all automation software is rule-based. Enter a rule and the software continually executes this rule without further human intervention. Operations Analysts spend their days adjusting the rules and adding new rules to automate more processes. They also maintain a log of items that need to be automated. As they get into the automation mindset by working with these tools daily, they will see these opportunities.

Automation Administrators or Managers manage the staff and the automation projects. Automation of computer systems requires some form of project management. You simply can't load the software, walk away, and say you are automated. Some tools implement more quickly than others, but all require some management.

The Automation Manager should also be involved in determining what software and hardware are brought into the data center. Technology should be evaluated for its ability to be automated as a criterion for purchase. I know several customers who went from traditional or legacy applications that ran fully automated to the new improved version of the software and discovered it had no provision for automation. This is a huge shock to an operations team.

Dream a little with us. We dream that some form of the word "automate" becomes part of a new generation of titles. If you have gone beyond the old traditional sense of operating and monitoring a computer system and now plan, strategize, and implement rules that continually control your operations department, you deserve recognition. When others were afraid to take on the challenge of automation, you used your desire and willpower to make it happen. If this sounds like you, you really are the Automation Guru, Champion or Manager!
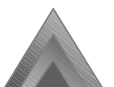
Tom Huntington is Vice President of Technical Services at Help/Systems, Inc. and a 15-year veteran of the company. He oversees the area of technical alliances, public relations, and large customer relationships. His job is to make sure that the Robot Automated Operations Solution for iSeries and AS/400 systems works with other major software and hardware vendors around the world. Tom has spoken at COMMON on Backup/Recovery, Work Management, Automation, and LPAR Technology.

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Join COMMON in 2004. Also, attend our IT Education Conference and Expo…
…in the Spring: San Antonio, May 2-6, 2004. Special focus is on Linux
…in the Fall: Toronto, October 17-21, 2004. Special focus is on Enterprise Application

To learn more, go to http://www.common.org
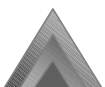
The Miscellaneous Manager

Jim Wazorick
Don't get me wrong – I love e-mail.

It's great to be able to keep in touch with former colleagues and friends around the country – people with whom I would have otherwise lost all contact. And, although it's too often used when a phone call or face-to-face interaction would be better, electronic mail has provided a quantum leap to business communication. I'm sooooo glad you-know-who invented the thing.

I don't mind spam, too much. Contrary to all of the hand-wringers that bemoan all of the productivity lost to junk mail, it really doesn't take that long each morning to delete the garbage. One can recognize and delete without opening most of the messages offering mail-order prescriptions, the enhancement of various body parts and business opportunities in Africa. I can even appreciate the irony of getting spammed by outfits, Microsoft included, that want to sell me products to control spam.

Like you, I have a number of friends who forward jokes, pictures, and tons of interesting information. I look forward to these every day, and, frankly, they don't take all that much time either. But I do have an issue with some of you.

Think before you forward.

Several times a week I get tidbits of information about well-known people, historical events, computer viruses, and virtually anything else you can imagine. Many of them are so astounding they're hard to believe. There's a good reason for that – they're urban legends, hoaxes, or just plain not true.

I've gotten mail warning me of a virus file that could wipe out my hard drive. A few minutes of research yielded the information that the file in question was an executable required for Java.

One of my favorites, received several times, involved the information that 1) On the Tonight Show, the late Lee Marvin was discussing the medal he was awarded at Iwo Jima. He stated that the bravest man he ever knew was his commanding officer, Bob Keeshan, known to us Baby Boomers as Captain Kangaroo; 2) The late Fred Rogers was a formerly a Navy Seal with numerous confirmed kills, and the reason he always wore sweaters was to cover his tattoos. One minute at www.snopes.com revealed that a) Marine Pfc. Lee Marvin was in fact awarded a Purple Heart after the Battle Of Saipan (for being wounded in the butt, no joke), several months before Iwo Jima; b) Bob Keeshan enlisted in the Marines in June, 1945, but saw no combat action; c) Fred Rogers was never in the military, had no tattoos, and was an ordained Presbyterian minister.

When I get stuff that sounds too good to be true, I check it out – it only takes a minute – and if I determine something to be a hoax I reply to the sender to let them know, and I DON'T SEND IT TO ANYONE ELSE! May I suggest that you do the same? Some of my (former?) friends probably think I'm a curmudgeonly pain in the ass, but I choose to look at it as a community service. Let's try to cut down on the crap going around, and there'll be more time to read the good stuff. Try www.snopes.com, urbanlegends.about.com (no www. with this one) or www.scambusters.org

Well, gotta go, the cab's waiting outside. I've got an appointment to see a man in Nigeria.
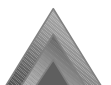
Education from COMMON

Shaking IT Up: Consultant or Employee? That Is the Question
by Kevin Vandever

Life is full of choices. Stop for a moment and think about how many decisions you've made since you woke up this morning. First, you probably pondered whether you should even get out of bed. After making that tough decision, you might have anguished over what to wear, what to eat. Your morning commute stress-tests your brain and glands: Should you stop or speed up at the yellow light? Which radio station should you listen to? Should you pull that son-of-a-gun over in front of you who just cut you off, making you spill your café mocha, and teach him a lesson in driving etiquette?

(Don't worry; no motor-vehicle operators were hurt during the writing of this column.)

The point is that our lives are filled with making lots of decisions every day. Corporate America is not immune from decision-making, either. One of the forks in the corporate IT road that I have been particularly close to is the decision to outsource IT projects or to complete them in-house. Having been a consultant myself, I have seen this decision made many times with little or no forethought, afterthought, or any thought at all.

While I can't help with your decision about whether to get out of bed, I can provide some information to help you decide when to hire a consultant and when not to. As painful as it may seem to the consultants out there (and I feel your pain), there are times when using a consultant is not the thing to do. However, there may be times—especially in this struggling economy—when hiring a consultant or contract programmer is exactly what you need to do. In fact, one of the common misconceptions today is that during these trying economic times, one should not even consider hiring a consultant because of the cost, but if you think about it a

little further, and use some of the guidelines that follow, you will find that the factors that help to define the decision to hire, or not hire, a consultant or contractor remain unchanged.

There are three primary reasons to hire a consultant or contractor.

1. When you have a problem or a project that is beyond the knowledge and experience of your staff, this is a great time to bring in a consultant. A good example is when a company decides to go to the Web. This is the time to bring in an expert in the new technology to get you started while your staff gets up to speed. The consultant also may be able to help train your staff.

2. If you are faced with a critical project that exceeds your in-house resources, you should solicit extra help, especially if getting the project done on time is of the utmost importance. Isn't it always? I have seen this happen a lot. Maybe you have a huge RPG project, and although you have plenty of RPG programmers on staff, it is imperative to the business that the project is completed on time. Why not bring in some temporary RPG help, especially if after the project is done the workload will go back to normal?

3. When you have a one-time project that requires minimal ongoing support, this is the perfect time to bring in a consultant or contractor. Maybe you have a conversion project that will take a couple of months to complete and will require little support. You could hire someone to come in, knock out the conversion project, and go away, without disrupting your current projects or irritating your staff by giving them undesirable work. There is no "undesirable" work for a consultant or contractor, only paid work.

There are also times when you probably won't want to hire a consultant or contractor, two of which come to mind.

Don't hire a consultant to perform work that reasonably can be done by internal staff. This seems obvious enough, but many times the ability of internal staff is not always
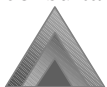
understood. Management may believe that something is beyond the ability of their internal staff or that the internal staff is too busy to accomplish the project. By understanding your staff and workload better, you might not need to bring in a consultant or a contractor to bring your business to the Web, because the very quiet Suzy and Johnny, way back in the far cubicles, have been taking classes and studying on the side and are ready, willing, and able. But first you have to ask and really listen.

Don't hire a consultant to work on an isolated project that will require extensive, ongoing support. I worked on an EDI implementation project as a consultant, and for years after it went into production I was the only one who understood the details. As far as I was concerned, that was awesome, because the company never wanted to let me go. Looking at things from the company's point of view, however, it probably would have been served best if it had used internal staff to handle such projects.

So far I've used the words consultant and contractor interchangeably, but they're not the same thing. Besides the fact that saying you're a consultant usually enables you to charge more for your services, a consultant is someone who should demonstrate knowledge and expertise that is unknown to the internal staff. For example, you might bring in a consultant to help design an EDI system or to help your Web developers communicate with the legacy systems and DB2 databases on an AS/400 or iSeries, because that knowledge may be beyond the scope of your RPG programmers. A contractor, on the other hand, is usually someone whose skills are available within the internal staff and in the job market. You might contract an RPG programmer to help your internal RPG programmers finish a critical project by a specific deadline.

Cost is also an important factor when deciding to outsource. You must determine if hiring a consultant is going to cost more than doing the project in-house. When measuring the cost, however, you must make sure you do it correctly. You cannot simply compare an employee's salary against a consultant's rate. You must take into consideration other tangible costs, like employee benefit costs, training, and how much time employees spend in meetings when they could be working on…sorry, where was I? Oh yeah, there are also

intangible costs to measure, like experience and expertise, which affect quality and timeliness, which, in turn, will affect support costs after the project has been implemented. So even though it may look at first glance like a consultant or contractor will be much more expensive, after further analysis you might see that the cost will be comparable to that of an employee. In some cases, it will be much more cost effective to hire the consultant or contractor.

Decisions, decisions. They're everywhere. Hopefully, I've made some of them easier by providing some useful guidelines to determine when to hire a consultant or contractor. If only I had some guidelines like this to help me decide if I should get out of bed in the morning, I'd be all set.

I would like to thank Jim Coker, IS director at Behr Process, in Santa Ana, California, who helped me gather the information used in this article for a presentation we used to deliver at COMMON, and for never cutting me off on the freeway.

Shaking IT Up is a monthly column written by Kevin Vandever and published in *The Four Hundred*, a weekly email newsletter produced by Midrange Server, Inc. Vandever is editor of *Midrange Programmer*, a hands-on programming newsletter also from Midrange Server. He can be contacted at kvandever@midrangeserver.com
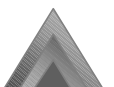
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Mark Your Calendars for February 17th!

February's Monthly dinner meeting features Al Grega from Lansa on UCCnet: The next wave for Retail Suppliers

Large retailers have sent letters to their suppliers requiring them to subscribe to UCCNet (A non-for profit global hub for the synchronization of product data between trading partners). Long gone are the days when a supplier can send a retailer a catalog with all their latest offerings. UCCNet is acting as THE main repository for product information, packaging, identification (UCC numbers), and pricing.

So what does a supplier do when they get one of these letters from a Wal-Mart sized retailer? They attend this meeting! This presentation will give the attendee an overview of UCCNet, how it functions and what to look for in a solution. UCCnet processing will be demonstrated using LANSA's solution.

Al Grega is responsible for promotion and channel development of LANSA software in the America's. Prior to joining LANSA Al was a 24 ½ year veteran of IBM spending his last 5 years as the iSeries e-business Segment Manager for IBM Americas. He has over 24 years of experience in IBM systems development, services and sales. Al has also taught at the State University of New York at Farmingdale and is currently a Subject Matter Expert (SME) for WebSphere and XML at COMMON (a Users Group – www.common.org).

A shepherd was herding his flock in a remote pasture when suddenly a brand new BMW advanced out of a dust cloud towards him. The driver, a young man in a Brioni suit, Gucci shoes, Ray Ban sunglasses and YSL tie, leans out the window and asks the shepherd: "If I tell you exactly how many sheep you have in your flock, will you give me one?" The shepherd looks at the man, obviously a yuppie, then looks at his peacefully grazing flock and calmly answers: "Sure. Why not?"

The yuppie parks his car, whips out his Dell notebook computer, connects it to his AT&T cell phone, surfs to a NASA page on the Internet, where he calls up a GPS satellite navigation system to get an exact fix on his location which he then feeds to another NASA satellite that scans the area in an ultra-high-resolution photo. Then the young man opens the digital photo in Adobe Photoshop and exports it to an image processing facility in Hamburg, Germany. Within seconds, he receives an email on his Palm Pilot that the image has been processed and the data stored. He then accesses a MS-SQL database through an ODBC connected Excel spreadsheet with hundreds of complex formulas. He uploads all of this data via an e-mail on his Blackberry and, after a few minutes, receives a response. Finally, he prints out a full color, 150-page report on his hi-tech, miniaturized HP LaserJet printer and turns to the shepherd and says: "You have exactly 1586 sheep."

"That's right. Well, I guess you can take one of my sheep" says the shepherd. He watches the young man select one of the animals and looks on amused as the young man stuffs it into the trunk of his car. Then the shepherd says to the young man:
"Hey, if I can tell you exactly what your business is, will you give me back my sheep?"

The young man thinks about it for a second and then says, "Okay, why not?"

"You're an IT consultant" says the shepherd.

"Wow! That's correct," says the yuppie, "but how did you guess that?"

"No guessing required." answered the shepherd "You showed up here even though nobody called you; you want to get paid for an answer I already knew; to a question I never asked; and you don't know crap about my business. Now give me back my dog.
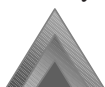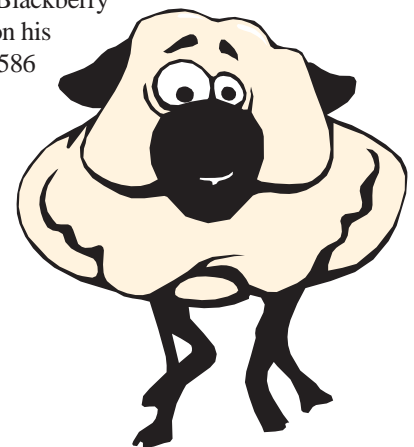
The Omni User

An Association of Computer Professionals
http://www.OmniUser.org
2021 Midwest Road, Suite 200
Oak Brook IL 60523
Please forward to current IS position holder

Address Correction Requested

OMNI Dinner Meeting
Tuesday, January 20, 2004

Topic: **Introduction to WebFacing:**
A Practical Example

Speaker: Dave Money of Andrews Consulting

Join us for refreshments, dinner and presentation!
Please RSVP by January 15, 2004
www.OmniUser.org

Please forward this to your current IS position holder, route this newsletter to appropriate person(s) and post on your bulletin board.

The OMNI User 2003 Board of Directors
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Board of Directors meeting - usually the fourth Monday of each month - if you wish to attend, please e-mail for directions to location or check website.