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## FROM THE EDITOR

# *M Computing*— Focus for the Year

by Kate M. Schell



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Recently the MTA did a member survey via their web page on member interests. Not surprisingly, WWW users who responded to the survey indicated that among their primary interests are Internet/Intranet issues. Does this mean that the average member is both using the Internet and designing internet applications? Perhaps, and perhaps not.

Other topics that received strong interest from survey respondents were "Database Servers," and "Middleware and application servers." It seems clear to me that for the survey respondents our new identity involves serving up data, and that there is strong interest in using browser technology. It also suggests to me that our three-year partnership with Database and Client-Server World produced a fundamental shift in the way the M world views itself.

After the WWW survey was tallied, Linux-based M systems burst upon the scene. There's an article on an Open Source M effort in this issue. I'm hoping that there will be more articles on this topic, perhaps describing experiences with Caché for Linux as well as FreeM.

Now that we've admitted that we will be mixing technologies to build the upcoming generations of M systems, it's time for some exploration of the technologies we're likely to use. Over the past five years there's been a fair amount written about GUI programming and M. Now there is a shift towards browser interfaces. These arenas have similarities and differences. Browsers and GUI development environments have text boxes, lists, and radio buttons, the potential for the use of color, and backgrounds. Browsers have additional capabilities in providing hyperlinks, but can have a hard time preserving state information. Browsers built on Java are (should be?) platform independent. GUI interfaces tend to favor Windows platforms.

What have your experiences been with these technologies? Where would you like them to take you tomorrow? What other technologies would you like to see discussed in these pages?


*M Computing* is looking for people who are willing to write about their experiences in developing systems using M as one of a number of technologies. If you've written a system with a browser front end and an M database, and you're willing to write about it, please contact me. If you've written a system using WebLink or PDQweb, how did it work out? Can anybody compare an M-based web development effort to a project using Apache?

We are also looking for articles on the development of object-based systems in M. If you've worked with ESI Objects or Caché Objects and would like to describe your experiences, please get in touch.

If M is used at either the database server or application server level in your current systems, would you be willing to describe the design of the system, to discuss the decision process used in the design, and the lessons your organization has learned in the process?

The focus for *M Computing* this year is presenting technical information that will improve an M professional's chances of succeeding in his or her job. If you can take the time to share interesting technical information, please let us know. Upcoming issues already have articles slated on: development using Caché Objects, development using ESI Objects, moving M systems to Object Databases, and the Partners P3 Architecture. Stay tuned. **M**

*Kate Schell is President of Jacquard Systems Research in Rockville, MD and the Executive Editor of M Computing. She can be reached through email at: cshell@JacquardSystems.com or through the MTA office at 301-431-4070.*




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