

tools of the trade



HP 12C Platinum

A Classic Refined Hewlett-Packard's HP 12C Financial Calculator was introduced in 1981 and has since become HP's best-selling calculator. The improved platinum edition will be released this month with features such as RPN (Reverse Polish Notation—for writing math expressions without parentheses or brackets), algebraic entry, and four times more memory. A favorite of finance, banking, and real estate professionals, the 12C Platinum has five modes: finance, statistic, PRGM (programming), RPN (Reverse Polish Notation), and ALG (algebraic). It can calculate TVM (loans, savings, and leasing); amortization; bond price and yield to maturity; register-based cash-flow analysis, NPV, IRR, with memory for 30 cash flows; do SL, DB, SOYD depreciation methods; and percent change and percent of total. Key-stroke programming has a

memory for 400 steps, and statistical functions include more than 130 built-in functions, cumulative statistical analysis, standard deviation, mean, weighted mean, linear regression, and forecasting. The standard math functions include power, square root, square, natural logarithms and exponential, fractional, integer, reciprocal, factorial, and rounding. The LCD display is 10-digit, and the single battery has a life of three years when used one hour per day. The 12C Platinum is conveniently small at about 3 x 5 inches.

www.hp-calculators.com

AdvantageFR™ from Advantage Financial Reporting, Inc. brings financial analysis and custom reporting to a manager's desktop without help from analysts or programmers. The applications can be implemented in less than 30 days for midmarket and divisions of major companies, regardless of the company's source G/L or other systems. The current applications include P&L, sales, expenses, capital expenditures, and product and project reporting and analysis (in dollars, units, or hours). The applications work with all accounting and database software, includ-

ing legacy systems, and are as easy to use as Quicken. Visit the AdvantageFR site for a demo and more details on the individual applications.

www.AdvantageFR.com



ICMS Meeting Monitor

ICMS, Inc. cost management consultants has a new tool for measuring the cost of time spent in meetings. Called **Meeting Monitor™**, the low-cost desktop application calculates in real time as the meeting takes place. The cost is based on who is attending and what their salaries are. The Meeting Monitor is downloadable from the Web. You can download and install it in less than five minutes, and it's very simple to use.

www.icms.net/meeting_monitor.htm



Advantage Financial Reporting

Google™—An Index for the World

Michael Castelluccio, Editor

■ WHEN YOU STOP FOR A SECOND and consider what the Google search engine does with each request, it's hard not to be amazed. That it's free is astounding.

Googling

Type in a word or phrase, *Moore's Law*, for example, and watch the screen. Exactly 0.13 seconds after you hit the enter key, the search yields about 147,000 responses, sorted by relevance, including basic information on what the law is, its history, and even some speculation about its future. Now that's some research librarian.

But everybody knows what Moore's Law is. What about

something a little more obscure? Reed's Law, for instance, which is about how social networks and computer networks are related. Hit enter, and in 0.24 seconds you get 15,700 references. Dig deeper, and you're reading about Fukuyama's concept of social capital.

The numbers that describe the value Google has created for its users are objective and simple to summarize. The free online service has indexed more than 2.4 billion Web pages in more than 30 languages. It is used to conduct more than 150 million searches a day for people around the world. For a subjective view, imagine someone has turned off Google and all the other search

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NETGEAR's MA401 802.11b Wireless PC Card is an 11Mbps plug-in connection to your local network that cuts the wires and lets you roam with your laptop throughout



NETGEAR Wireless
PC Card

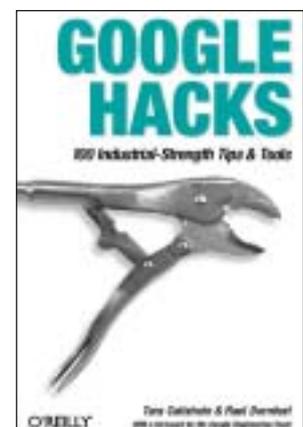
the office with continuous connection to e-mail, printers, and other network resources. It also works with wireless Internet services available in airports and hotels (in so-called "hot spots"), and the card supports most notebook PCs. The 802.11 is a standard established for radio contact between

devices in a wireless local area network. When you go to NETGEAR's site to check out the MA401 card, you can also find a wealth of general information on the kinds of wireless networks, standards, encryption for security, and the company's family of products for both home and office networks. Go to the home page at www.netgear.com, and click on the products tab at the top of the page. A drop-down list includes wireless. Click that, and at the bottom of the page there are five papers in PDF on wireless technology.

The book *Google Hacks* from O'Reilly & Associates, Inc. is exactly what its subtitle promises—100 Industrial Strength Tips and Tools for using the

best search engine on the Internet. The term hacks refers to the original meaning of hacking as "an appropriate application of ingenuity" in search of a solution or workaround. The hacks in the book range from detailed explanations of basic services to small programs that customize your own searches. For example, many people know that Google will translate foreign text and whole pages, but the book explains how to change your interface preference to another language, including fictional ones like Klingon or Pig Latin. It also cautions that you need to be able to read the language to change it back, or you'll need a hack. The book is worth the time just for its explanations of how Google works and how to phrase

queries, but it's so much more for serious users. But it isn't all serious. There are games like Google Whacking, which involves coming up with a two-word query that yields only one result (no quotes, proper names, or made-up words). More information about the book, including Table of Contents, index, and sample hacks can be found at www.oreilly.com/catalog/googlehks/.



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engines. For the near future you're going to have to go out there, online, alone. For most people, that would immediately shrink the Internet to e-mail and just those sites for which you already have addresses. It would effectively be the end of the Internet as most of us know it.

Google History

Cofounders Larry Page and Sergey Brin knew each other at Stanford University in 1995—both were graduate students in computer science. Their first version of Google was called BackRub, and its data center was located in Page's dorm room. It didn't take long for the idea to explode onto the Internet, and the contact with other revolutionary individuals and technologies soon followed. David Filo (Yahoo! founder) encouraged the team early on and later became a partner. Linux (Linus Torvald's Open Source operating system) was the system running its servers, and Red Hat was its first commercial customer. Charlie Ayers, the company chef, was formerly the cook for the Grateful Dead.

As BackRub developed street cred, the name was changed to Google—from the mathematical term googol, which is the number 1 followed by 100 zeroes, equal to 10^{100} . In five short years, Google went from a humble beginning on borrowed hardware to a billion-page index. By the time it won the Webby Award in June 2000 it had become the world's largest and, according to those granting it the People's Voice Award, the best search engine in the world.

Froogling

With the wide variety of services available on Google, you might expect the home page to be a jumble of



lists, boxes, images, and links. Not so, thanks to a designer with apparent taste. The Google home page is mostly white space. There are no pictures and only 32 words of text. Oh, yes, there are also two numbers—the year and the number of pages indexed (3,083,324,652 as of this writing). Such a clean, white entrance into such bewildering complexity.

After you type what you want to look up in the central box, you can either do a conventional search or click "I'm Feeling Lucky"™. The Lucky button will take you to the first Web page returned for your query. The regular Search button will present you with a weighted list—most relevant sites listed first.

If you look above the box, there are five categories in which to search. The default is the Web, but if you are just looking for a picture of, say, Google's Page and Brin, you can enter their names and highlight the Images button. The Groups button is for searching among Usenet discussion forums. The Directory button organizes the Web into categories such as arts, business, computers, and so on for direct searching. The News button lets you browse and search 4,500 news sources from around the world.

There are two other areas on the home page that you should look into. Services & Tools on the bottom will

take you to a list of a dozen Google Betas and five useful tools. Among the Betas, there are Froogle (a shopping Google), Google Catalogs (searchable mail-order catalogs), Google University Search (alphabetical list of links to colleges and universities), and Google Wireless (a guide for using cellular phones and handhelds to access Google). Among the tools are a browser button and Google Toolbar for adding instant access to Google from any Web page. The Google Translate Tool can be used for phrases or entire Web pages.

If you would like to take the pulse of popular culture, you might find the Google Zeitgeist list of Top 10 Gaining Queries and Top 10 Declining Queries for each week useful. You can get to the Zeitgeist page through the Jobs, Press, & Help link, or just dial up www.google.com/press/zeitgeist.html and then bookmark it for faster future access. There's a wealth of other information on the same page, including Top Image Search Queries and languages used.

If you spend a little time exploring the Google home page and learn how to use its many services, you're probably going to get a lot more out of the Internet with far less time spent wandering around. Although, just wandering in the world's biggest library isn't such a bad idea either. ■