

# tools of the trade

The Foleo™ from Palm®, Inc., is a companion device for your smart phone that uses a 10-inch screen and full-size keyboard to make some of your phone's functions much more comfortable. It's not a scaled-down laptop. That's obvious as soon as you open the clamshell case and the Foleo comes on immediately with the push of a button. Palm explains that this isn't just another accessory but a new product category—just as the original Palm Pilot was a new computing category. The Foleo sees and listens to your phone through a Bluetooth wireless connection,

and if your thumbs are already developing early arthritic symptoms from too much typing, you can view and answer longer e-mails using the other eight digits that are only a cradle for thumb-texters. A single button opens access to your e-mail. The Foleo will also relax the squint that accompanies reading Web content on your Treo phone. The connection can be through your phone or via a hot spot in a café, hotel, or library. The Foleo can read and write Word- and Excel-compatible documents, and it runs on a Linux operating system. Due to be released this

summer, the price is \$499. Check the [www.palm.com](http://www.palm.com) website for brief video promos and availability dates.

UPEK®, Inc., has a personal fingerprint authentication device that will simplify your life if you have too many passwords to try and keep straight. The Eikon™ Digital Privacy Manager consists of a fingerprint reader and the Protector Suite QL software. The reader is small, 1.25" × 3.25", has a nonslip base that keeps it in place, and the USB cord is long enough to reach the front or back of your PC. You set it up by scanning one or all of your fingers into the system. You can assign different fingers to launch different applications. The program is simple to use. You swipe your fingerprint, and a control panel opens (Bio-menu). There are five choices: You can lock your computer, open a drop-down list of sites register-



**Eikon Privacy Manager**

ed to be opened by your print, register a log-in as a protected area, go to the control center, or get help. Click on a registered site in the drop-down to open that site. There's also a way to encrypt file folders that you can open by swiping your finger. For each of the processes there is the option to create a backup password that will bypass the reader. For less than \$50 list, the Privacy Manager is a bargain for the password-weary. [www.upek.com](http://www.upek.com)

Pendock Mallorn Ltd. has released Pro-formas for Professionals (PFP)-Platinum Version. Fully compatible with Excel 97 through Excel 2007, PFP is professional financial



**Palm Foleo**

## Who Needs Rules? ◆ Michael Castelluccio, Editor

■ SURE, THE WEB IS A GREAT PLACE TO EXPERIMENT, maybe even do some rubber-band exercises with the conventional rules, but there have to be limits, right? Common sense dictates that stuff just doesn't work when there are no controls.

Consider the following hypothetical setting for a consumer electronics shop.

The place is kind of small, and in the front window are large ads for the shop's competitors. When you enter, the odds are something like 65-35 that you will be insulted or greeted with some kind of wisemouth remark.

When you ask about a product other than the one prominently displayed on the counter, you are told, "We don't have it." And that's the reason the shop's so small.

The item on the counter is all there is. That's what they're selling today, only that. You're told, "If you're interested in anything else, see you later."

Because you really have no interest in the digital toaster oven on the counter you decide to leave, but then you notice, posted up on the wall, a list of what the store makes on the products it sells. Their cut of the deal is right there on the wall.

Turning, you notice a small group of people, customers you guess, arguing about the toaster oven. Some are loudly criticizing its lack of features, its manufacturer, and the price; some are impressed enough to buy one.

As you reach the door, the counter guy calls over to you, "We close at midnight. Come *continued on next page*



**Pro-formas for Professionals**

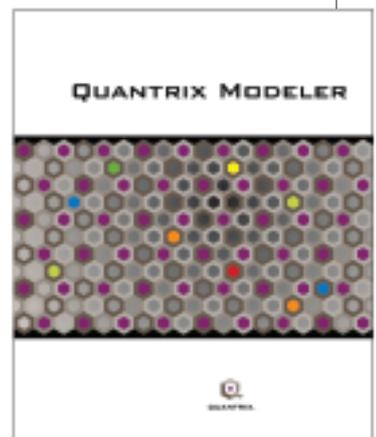
forecasting software with features to suit just about any type and size company from owner-managed businesses to multidivisional corporations. In addition to business planning, PFP helps create budgets for each profit and administrative center, will consolidate up to 30 companies, create PDF files, download actual-to-date numbers from any accounting program that can export to Excel, forecast an unlimited number

of years, and create variance analyses for each profit and administrative center. PFP calculates federal, state, and local taxes; an unlimited number of long-term loans (payable and receivable); and allocates the current long-term portions on the balance sheet. It calculates management bonuses, including bonuses based on ROI, and all interest costs and interest income. The model can summarize monthly budgets into a comparative annual format, create trend lines for each expense and revenue item based on the last five years, and compare this to next year's budget. Visit [www.pendock.com](http://www.pendock.com) for more information.

**Quantrix Modeler Version 2.2** is a multidimensional

financial modeling program used in planning, forecasting, budgeting, risk analysis, and business intelligence and reporting. Unlike two-dimensional spreadsheets, Quantrix has formulas that reside outside the cell, allowing one formula to calculate a structural range of cells. The formulas use natural language labels for each organizational unit. Multidimensional views are easily accessed with a button click, and you can modify variables without changing entire structures or rewriting the formulas. Quantrix lets you view information in a much more flexible way: dollars by product, by time, by division, by unit, or any dimension you require. There's a 15-minute demo and a 30-minute tutorial

on the [www.quantrix.com](http://www.quantrix.com) website. From the site you can download a free 30-day evaluation of the program. Several white papers in PDF format are available, and these cover the differences between two-dimensional spreadsheets and the Modeler as well as using XBRL with Modeler for financial analyses.



**Multidimensional Financial Modeling**

*continued from p. 57*

back tomorrow, and we'll have a different item."

Someone from the discussion group in the corner nods, adding, "If you're lucky, he'll put up a bag o' crap tomorrow; if you're fast enough, you can cop one for only a buck."

You know it's a mistake, but you ask the question anyhow, "A bag o' crap? Just what do you get for a buck with a bag o' crap?"

"No one knows," he replies happily. "That's why they sell out so fast. But you have to be here, and you have to be quick."

"O.K. I'll see if I can free up some time tomorrow," you say as you pull open the door for what you're sure is your last exit out of this sure-to-be-short-lived enterprise.

### **One Day, One Deal<sup>SM</sup>**

Strange but true, this place actually exists. It's called Woot, and it will celebrate its third birthday online this month. Founded by Matt Rutledge, Woot lives in Carrollton, Texas, and when it was only a year old, it was listed by *Time* magazine among its 50 coolest websites. Not only does Woot have a bizarre business model, but it has an attitude that breaks any number of rules.

The motto, One Day, One Deal, covers the retail strategy, but it says little about the attitude on the site ([www.woot.com](http://www.woot.com)). Both customers and products get ripped on a regular basis.

A recently offered webcam came with a warning that if you buy one, you will have to deal with the panic that now your instant messaging list will finally be able to see what you look like. And the products don't escape the sarcasm. A remote security siren for your car was hyped in the following way: "Yes, we've been told that deafeningly loud car alarms

somehow deter automobile theft. And while we don't understand how, exactly, that's supposed to work, well, who are we to argue? [Some product details, then...] With the BOA Portable Remote Security System, you can stop staying up all night worrying about your car getting stolen, and start staying up all night because your car alarm keeps waking you up."

During the course of the day, Wooters are encouraged to e-mail comments about the products. There are

## **Not only does Woot have a bizarre business model, but it has an attitude that breaks any number of rules.**

usually hundreds replying, and the best are pushed to the top of the list. Recently, a Dyson Vacuum cleaner inspired these remarks: "I have one, and the only thing you need to worry about is cleaning the cylinder. Besides this, Dyson will clean up a murder." A contrary view was offered by eddo: "Bought one from Costco about 2 weeks ago and returned it. It sucks!! Seriously!! Too powerful...it was sucking the rug into it." Someone named ricrok asked, "If it's a lifetime filter to begin with, why the hell do you need an extra one?" Another poster told you how to take the thing apart if it ever clogs on you.

Another oddity is Woot's glass bookkeeping. Product stats are posted during a sale and after. The first buyer, called the "first sucker," is listed by user name, as is the last buyer, who is called the "Wooter to blame for the sellout." The exact

times of the first and last sales are listed alongside the cash taken in, "Woot wage," every hour. A graph shows the percentages of sales per hour, and the purchaser breakdown includes how many they bought, how long they have been members, and how much other merchandise they have purchased in the past.

Usually, it's one item per day offered at decent discount, but there are variations. On Two for Tuesday, two of the same item are offered in a single sale. And then there's the Woot Off and the BOC.

### **Woot Offs and BOC**

A Woot Off can last for one to three days, and one product follows another, with each opportunity ending when the supply is exhausted. You can tell if it's a Woot Off because a strip of emergency lights appears under the product.

Woot's version of the grab bag is the BOC (bag o' crap), which appears unannounced and will last only for minutes with either a sellout or an assault on Woot's servers sufficient to crash them. In fact, when the BOC first appears as a brown bag, a message below it reads: "If you can see this, our servers haven't crashed yet. Good luck!" And the sales hype to encourage you? "To call it garbage is an insult to honest, hard-working garbage. This BOC is essentially a legal way for us to steal your money." But you'd better be quick with your mouse if you want your dollar's worth of odds and ends.

And how well does Woot do? Well, you could create your own spreadsheets from the info they post, but, in a single number, the latest total of registered users (April 2007) is purported to be 700,000. No wonder the company's name is based on an enthusiastic interjection. ■