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Editor's Notes

By Howard Callif

This edition has articles that cover a wide variety of topics. I think our cover story on the Winchester House raises an issue that many of our readers encounter in everyday life, and will hopefully result in some "soul searching." Thanks to all of the authors for their hard work! I'd also like to call special attention to the call for illustration system articles—we are hoping to begin a series of articles on software used to sell and market insurance products.

There have been several comments and questions I've received, which I'd like to share (edited for space/clarity):

From: Richard A. Becker	**Subject:** CompAct

I've just skimmed (and enjoyed) the January issue of CompAct. In your Editor's Notes you asked about topics that may be of interest to readers. VB Macros and Converting from Visual Basic 6.0 to VB .NET are of interest to me. We have a large codebase of VB 6.0 code and I'd like to get an idea of the effort required to convert this code to VB .NET (and, possibly, C#).

Thanks in advance (and keep up the good work).

EDITOR'S REPLY: Thanks to Richard Becker for feedback on what articles would be useful on VB6 and VBNet! We will try to get information on VB Macros, or at least some book reviews. I will write an article on converting systems from VB6 to VBNET (or C#), but this will take a while. In the meantime, the books Moving to VB.NET: Strategies, Concepts, and Code by Dan Appleman, and Upgrading Microsoft Visual Basic 6.0 to Microsoft Visual Basic .NET by Robinson/Bond/ Oliver are both excellent resources on the topic, as is a reference of VB6 functions in NET: *http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Visual_Basic_6_to_.NET_Function_Equivalents*. The following reference will explain the foolishness of the effort: *http://visualbasic. about.com/od/imhoinmyhumbleopinion/l/aa120102a.htm*. There is also commercial software available (Francis Balena has written excellent books on VB, and has a product called VB Migration Partner available, although I have not used it). There is an open source editor called SharpDevelop that I am told will convert VBNET to C# (and back), although I have not used that either (see *http://sourceforge.net/projects/ sharpdevelop/*). Thanks again for your feedback.

From: Will Slade	**Subject:** CompAct Topics

In the last issue, you ran a request for a list of topics that would be useful for CompAct. At least in my company, many actuaries that write code are unaware of version control, and the problems that it solves.

I also think that there is a great article yet to be written that would highlight the strengths of databases over the weaknesses of spreadsheets. In my experience, I've seen a lot of things that should be handled by databases, but are instead being passed around in spreadsheets that have a very large probability of error. Actually, now that I think of it, I'd be willing to write an article on spreadsheet validation.

Thanks!

EDITOR'S REPLY: Thanks to Will Slade for the suggestion to write about version control systems, databases vs. spreadsheets, and for offering to write an article on spreadsheet validation. Version control systems are a topic I would not have thought of, and I will do some research. If someone has expertise or experience on the topic of databases vs. excel spreadsheets, please consider volunteering to do an article. We rely on our membership to source and write articles, so we thank you for your offer, and hope we can find someone who is willing to return the favor!!

From: Lance Cary	**Subject:** Calculation of Generalized IRR in Excel

Howard,

The reason for my e-mail is that we are working on incorporating Becker's Generalized IRR method into one of our spreadsheets. In doing a search for relevant information I came across Tim Rozar's article in the April 2008 issue of CompAct. In the article it says to contact you to get a sample workbook with the function and the examples e-mailed to you. If you could e-mail this to me I'd really appreciate it.

Thanks for your help.

EDITOR'S REPLY: Tim Rozar's spreadsheet on a Generalized IRR method (in the April 2008 issue) was sent to Lance upon his request, along with a "hello," since we worked together years ago when I was an intern at Republic National Life. We are thrilled to be able to help out, since our vision is for CompAct to be a resource exactly like this! Thanks again to Tim for writing the article!

Please contact me if you have any ideas, suggestions or comments (even if it is to just point out a typo). ◼

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