# @ WORK

# Big Oops!

By William Powell

I can't remember the first time I sent an email and then immediately wished I hadn't. And then did it again and again. Most had typos, some were a bit heated. Nothing to lose sleep over, but a few fell into the "What was I thinking?" category. The thought of them sitting in someone's email archives or floating around cyberspace pummels my stomach like a tenderizing mallet flattening a piece of flank steak.

Thankfully, for those of us who occasionally send first and think later, there are a few programs on the market that can ensure that our embarrassment is fleeting.

One is Disappearing Email from Omniva ◁ **www.disappearing.com.** This add-in is a free trial version of the company's more advanced Omniva Policy Client. It works with Microsoft Outlook 98 and 2000, and is similar to a typical email encryption program. The difference is that instead of encrypting the

message initially, Disappearing Email enables the user to delay the encryption until after the message has been sent. Once encrypted, the email becomes unreadable. Whether the delay is 30 minutes or 30 days is up to you.

One caveat: Disappearing Email is kind enough to inform recipients that your message has been set to self-destruct. There's nothing stopping them from copying and pasting your message to another document.

Should you think that federal agencies are tracking your email or that it's all one big conspiracy, 1on1mail.com offers a stand-alone email application that goes several steps further. The application features military-spec encryption, unique "1on1" keys that prevent government agency access, retrieval of a message after it has been read, and a read-only feature that prevents recipients from saving the email to a disk. Downloads of 1on1mail are available from the company's Website for US$46 ◄⑴ **www.1on1mail.com.**

Of course, the best way to avoid embarrassment is not to send questionable messages. But then, to err is human, and to scramble for the self-destruct key is just plain cool.

## Site Seeing

If there's one way to perform a task in Microsoft's Internet Explorer, there are a dozen. Take Favorites (Bookmarks for Netscape users). I like the idea of storing my favorite Websites in a handy drop-down list. One day, I'll take the time to organize them all into subfolders and create a well-tended library of only the best sites on the Web. But once you have 25, 50, 100—they're not really favorites, are they? We know our favorite Web addresses by heart. It's much easier to open a dialogue box and type *Amazon.com* than it is to navigate a series of menus. But on those days when even typing is a hassle, there's yet another option for gaining quick access

# Bee in a Bubble

Ferry Halim's creations are charming, elegant, and deceptively addictive. The 28-year-old game designer from Fresno, California, utilizes Macromedia's Flash to create fully functional browser-based games that are guaranteed to put a serious hitch in your productivity.

Halim uses small files, usually no larger than 200Kb, that run using ActiveX. But these aren't the crude, pixilated games from your childhood; they're much more sophisticated. With a look similar in style to Japanese illustrations, the games' color palette is muted and animation is strictly 2D. A gauzy sheen creates a dreamlike effect, which is enhanced by simple, often soothing, background music.

The games are also infused with a sense of humor. In Midnight Serenade, you serenade your lover while catching the roses she throws to you, trying to avoid the old shoes and cans thrown by the neighbors. In Hydrophobia, you play a hungry frog that can't swim.

Halim offers 26 games on his site, each taking only a couple of weeks to design but many weeks to master. After two weeks of Bubble Bees, I'm nowhere near the top 10. Of course, you don't have to be an adult with a soft spot for goofing off to enjoy Halim's creations. Get the kids hooked, too. Halim has made a conscious effort to keep his games nonviolent.

◄⑴ **www.orisinal.com**
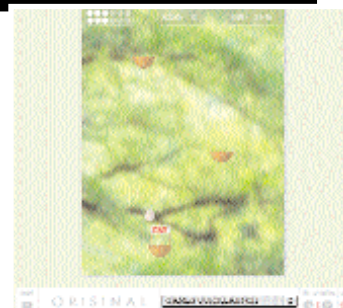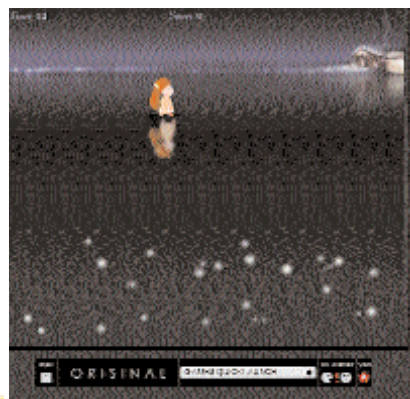
# Notable and **Quotable**

"The Web is both an enabler and a reflection of our best nature." David Weinberger, author of *Small Pieces Loosely Joined* and co-author of *Cluetrain Manifesto.* From the *Fast Company* department Internet 101, March 2002

◁ɐ) **www.fastcompany.com**

"Culture transmits memory, but not all memory: It filters. It filters well or badly, but if anything, what has allowed us to interact socially is the fact that we have had all of these filters.... With the Web, everyone is in the situation of having to filter information that is so vast, and so unsustainable, that if it isn't filtered, it cannot be absorbed." Umberto Eco, author, from an interview with Text-e.org

◁ɐ) **www.text-e.org**

to the sites you use every day—your favorite favorites.

The tool of which I speak is IE's Links bar. Now, before you say that you don't have a Links bar, I assure you that you do. It's tucked away to the right of the Address bar. Problem is, unless you adjust the width of the Address bar, you'll never see the links. First, go to View, then Toolbars, and make sure that the Links bar is checked. Next, drag the links bar below the Location bar. That will give you a full bar to work with and reveal a group of default buttons.

Buttons can be added to the toolbar by clicking on a Webpage's icon—either in the Location bar, from your list of favorites, or from your desktop—and then dragging it to the desired location on the bar. Once added, buttons can be renamed (right-click on button, select Rename). To remove a button from the toolbar, right-click on the button and select Delete.

Netscape users (4.X and higher) have a similar feature called the Personal Toolbar. Just drag the location button to the toolbar to create the shortcut.

## GURL Power

Microsoft just can't catch a break with its .NET platform. Derided by the press for early security and privacy issues, the platform, which is designed to allow users to access programs online via a wide array of devices, is even taking it on the chin from teenage girls. A recent Reuters report states that someone claiming to be a 17-year-old girl has created a new virus that targets the .NET platform.

Sent to Sophos, a UK-based computer security company, this worm is the product of a budding social conscience. Going by the handle "Gigabyte," the virus's creator stated in her message to Sophos that the virus is intended to be a statement against sexism in the male-dominated, anti-virus industry and against the perceived

lack of female     ◁ɐ) **www.sophos.co.uk**
virus writers.

Written in C-sharp, the programming language used on the .NET platforms, the worm spreads via Outlook email and has the subject line, "Important: Windows update." Once the virus infects a computer, it determines whether the computer has .NET technology installed. If so, it then targets certain executable files.

Don't worry, the virus hasn't been "released into the wild," as they say. Its creator was just trying to make a point. What that point is, however, isn't clear. Did anyone really doubt that women could create computer viruses ably?

A visit to Gigabyte's homepage says that when she's not attempting to embarrass Microsoft or make sociopolitical gestures, she likes house and trance music and takes kickboxing classes.

◁ɐ) **Source/Reuters**

**William Powell** *is an associate editor of* T+D; *wpowell@astd.com.*

**@Work** *covers Internet technology trends, news, and tips. Send comments, questions, and items of interest to atwork@astd.org.*

# By the Numbers

941 global population (in millions) of Internet users by 2005. IDC analysts predict that Internet use will surpass voice traffic later this year. ◁ɐ) **Source/IDC www.idc.com**

40 number of online filings (in millions) received by the IRS in 2001. The federal agency expects that number to increase to 45 million for 2002. ◁ɐ) **Source/Internal Revenue Service www.irs.gov**

6.8 revenue (in billions of dollars) generated by online airline ticket sales in 2001. ◁ɐ) **Source/eMarketer www.emarketer.com**