The Embedded Muse 44

Editor: Jack Ganssle   (jack@ganssle.com)   February 4, 2000

Editor's Notes

I get a lot of response to these Embedded Muses, both positive and at times negative, though always well reasoned and thoughtful. One pattern has become clear, though. Musings on technical subjects seems to be well received, while those about managing the embedded design process sometimes provoke discontent. One wag gently calls those Muses that discuss non-technical issues "content-free".

Yet I can't leave process and management issues alone; these are at the very root of the success of any development effort. So, I've decided to partition the management musings into a separate newsletter (Managing Embedded Systems). I'd never automatically subscribe anyone, so if interested, sign up by either dropping me an email (mailto:jack@ganssle.com) or by entering your email address and hitting the signup button at http://www.ganssle.com. Feel free to pass this on to your boss as well, especially if you feel he/she needs more insight into embedded issues… ;)

I also want to assure Muse readers that, despite constant queries, I never make this list available to any other person or organization.

Finally, last issue I asked readers to submit info about the good and bad experiences they've had with their toolchains. A handful of readers (thanks all!) sent in comments, all of which are now online at http://www.ganssle.com/tool-rvw/tools.html. <nag> But here's a bit of gentle nagging: please do contribute comments on your tools. The more data we acquire, the more useful this service will be to the rest of the industry. A frequent complaint we hear is that developers are so busy doing projects they don't take the time to write or to interact with their peers. The result is a loss to us all, as we all wind up making the same mistakes. Here's a chance to break this habit, to the betterment of everyone. </nag>

File Format Central

What's the format of OMF? How about .BMP files or IEEE-695? Did you forget the layout of Intel Hex files? Don't despair, help is here. One very cool website that logs hundreds of file formats, as well as other useful goodies like mouse comm standards, x86 instruction sets, etc, is `http://www.wotsit.org`. Highly recommended.

The Ganssle Group, www.ganssle.com

In researching an upcoming article about USB for Embedded Systems Programming I found that Jan Axelson has a new book about the subject. She's the wiz who brought us "Serial Port Complete" and "Parallel Port Complete". Her new book is an essential resource for USB developers. Her site (`http://www.lvr.com`) contains links to most every USB data source. Also highly recommended.

Thought for the Week

From Steve Litt at troubleshooters.com:
Millennium Pie (with apologies to Don McLean)

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A long, long time ago... I can still remember how
Computers used to make me smile.
And I knew if I had my chance,
That I could make electrons dance,
And maybe I'd be happy for a while.
But January made me shiver,
it chilled me deep down in my liver,
Bad news I'd collected...
I couldn't get connected.
I can't remember back that day
When I first knew the Y2K
But something touched me anyway,
The day computers died.

So, ...Bye, bye to the next digit of Pi
Ran my PC on some DC but the voltage was dry
And good ol' boys were sending e  -mail replies
Saying this w ill be the day I retire
this will be the day I retire

Can you write in C plus plus ?
And do you have faith in your local bus
If the driver tells you so?
Do you believe in Compaq's goals
Can software save your mortal soul
And can you teach me how to type r  eal slow ?
Well I thought that you were prepared
'Cause your memo said you weren't impaired
Your stationery's swell
But you can go to hell
```

I was a lonely teenage Unix hack
With an incantation and a modem jack
but I knew the cat had left the sack
The day co mputers died
I started singin'...

Bye, bye to the next digit of Pi
Ran my PC on some DC but the voltage was dry
And good ol' boys were sending e -mail replies
Saying this will be the day I retire
this will be the day I retire

Now for 10 years we've ignore d the threat
And we haven't solved the problem yet
But that's not how it used to be
When the luddites read for the king and queen
with a light they filled with kerosene
And some manuals they stole from you and me
And while Bill Gates was looking pleased
Time stole his monopolies
The courtroom was adjourned
No verdict was returned
While Apple tried a color scheme
The engineers returned to steam
And we had purges of their dreams
The day computers died
We were singin'

Bye, bye to the next digit of Pi
Ran my P C on some DC but the voltage was dry
And good ol' boys were sending e -mail replies
Saying this will be the day I retire
this will be the day I retire

Intel inside in an iron smelter
The food leftover from my fallout shelter
Twinkies old and aging fast
I'd rather eat the grass
Q and A tried for a system crash
With the tester on the sidelines in a cast
Now the timeshare net was running Doom
While mainframes played a marching tune
We all tried to log in
Oh, but we never could begin

'Cause Cobol tried to take   the field,
And Hollerith refused to yield.
Do you recall what was revealed,
The day computers died?
We started singing

Bye, bye to the next digit of Pi
Ran my PC on some DC but the voltage was dry
And good ol' boys were sending e   -mail replies
Saying this will be the day I retire
this will be the day I retire

There we were all in a state
A generation - really late
With no time left to start again
So come on mouse be nimble, mouse be quick
Don't let my spreadsheet data stick
Cause data is the devil's only fr   iend.
As I watched him on my screen
My hands and face were drenched in steam
No angel born in hell
Could run that stupid shell
And as the ball climbed high into the night
To call the sacrificial night
I saw Dick Clark laughing with delight
the day computer s died.
I met a girl with a cell phone
And I asked her for a dial tone
But she just smiled and turned away

I went down to the software store
Where I'd seen computers years before
But the man there said the games there wouldn't play
And in the streets the   children screamed
The lovers cried and the poets dreamed
their interface was spoken
The Internet was broken

And the three things I connect to most
The Website, Lan and the Network host
Every single one was toast
The day computers died
They were singin'

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Bye, bye to the next digit of Pi
Ran my PC on some DC but the voltage was dry
And good ol' boys were sending e  -mail replies
Saying this will be the day I retire
this will be the day I retire.
```

About The Embedded Muse

The Embedded Muse is an occasional newsletter sent via email by Jack Ganssle. Send complaints, comments, and contributions to him at jack@ganssle.com.

To subscribe, send a message to majordomo@ganssle.com, with the words "subscribe embedded *your-email-address*" in the body. To unsubscribe, change the message to "unsubscribe embedded *your-email-address*".

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