



## ATM pioneer refunds fees

*Is Cumberston Code to Blame for a Major ATM Malfunction?*

The industry that brought us 24-hour, self-service, Internet banking and drive-through transactions now stands accused of using "creaky software" to support its services. The spotlight shone on this problem as ATM pioneer Citibank experienced software glitches that caused 2,000 ATMs to stop serving money to customers. Citibank is now refunding any fees that customers incurred at ATMs of other banks.

Experts contend there are a number of reasons why banking software seems to be breaking down. Aside from the age of the code—and the constant turnover of programmers—there's also the ubiquitous merger and acquisition activity that always seems to be taking place. In fact, Citibank had recently acquired European American Bank and was in the process of linking the two disparate systems when the glitch occurred.

While Citibank isn't alone in its ATM and Internet woes, the costs of refunding service fees and lost business continue to climb. And so, the move is on for banks to upgrade archaic software programs that lead to small glitches...and big bills.

—from CNET, CNN.com, and CBS.MarketWatch.com

**"It must be better than when I went to school; the teachers used to hit us on our knuckles... But even if I wanted to go I [couldn't] because I can't read or hear very well."**

—A surprised Olga Dahl, who received a notice to attend a pre-primary school in Sweden. A computer error registered Dahl as six—instead of her correct age of 106—years old. (Reported by [ananova.com](http://ananova.com).)

## Virtual graffiti

*When Slashdot Asked the Question "How Public Should Public Records Be?" They Got an Answer*

Computer pranksters, whose testing found and exploited a software flaw, were able to access and deface a Web site that makes New York City voter registration records freely available online. The site, RegisterToVoteOrNot.com, was recently featured in an online *New York Times* article. Soon after, the article was linked to by Slashdot.com, whose writers introduced it with a privacy-focused story titled "How Public Should Public Records Be?"

As a news and discussion site for computer enthusiasts, Slashdot often includes discussions about privacy among its users. "I'm amazed by what I can find about people on the Web already," says one member. Also under scrutiny was a Web site's vulnerability. So Slashdot's story included the name and birth date of New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani for the purposes of allowing readers to test the system.

It wasn't long before a number of users proceeded to "take over the appearance of the home page," according to Michael Weikner, chairman of E The People, the charitable organization that developed the site. Visitors were greeted with messages like "Hacked by William S." and "You lose!"

The access appears to have been granted by a flaw in the site's comment section, where the site's software did not properly filter comments that included HTML code and JavaScript. As a result, the guest book interface incurred several defacements that were then displayed on the front page.

The virtual graffiti was essentially harmless, and the flaw was quickly corrected. Weikner was adamant that no voter information was compromised.

—From [WashingtonPost.com](http://WashingtonPost.com) and [Slashdot.org](http://Slashdot.org)

## Single-currency shenanigans

*As the Conversion Deadline Approaches, Is Europe Ready for the Euro?*

Three hundred million citizens in a dozen European countries will share a single currency beginning January 1, 2002. But European companies who haven't begun their Euro transition planning aren't going to be ready by the January 1 deadline, and estimates show that as many as 40% have yet to get started.

More significant is the fact that only 20% of the converted companies have had their software certified by the Business Application Software Developers' Association Ltd. According to Patrick O'Beirne, a principal at Systems Modelling Ltd., "the majority [of companies] are converting incorrectly and don't know it." He also said most companies that have received the certification failed on their first attempt to convert their systems.

With concerns mounting, it looks like Y2.002K could bring some of the chaos and confusion that Y2K failed to deliver.

—from [Computerworld.com](http://Computerworld.com), [CBS News](http://CBS News), [Strategic Finance](http://Strategic Finance), and [ananova.com](http://ananova.com)

Contributions from editorial staff members Alison Kincaid, Anne Meilof, Pamela Young, and overseas software tester Erik Petersen.