

getright calling

Remember when Netscape 3 came out? Remember attempting to download it, getting 90% of the way through it only to lose that 14.4 connection you'd spent ages trying to establish.

I've downloaded gigabytes of data in the last 6 years - what's helped me greatly in the last 2 has been [Getright](#), a download manager and resumer to boot. Its creator is Michael Burford and I took some time out of his life to ask a few questions.

Hi Michael, thanks for agreeing to do this and sharing your views. I've a couple of questions for you about your program Getright and about the internet in general. Getright is one of the few programs I've ever bothered to register. Where did the idea for Getright spring from?

A couple years ago, I was trying to download some demo--I don't even remember what; my ISP was having problems so kept cutting me off half way thru the file. After a few wasted hours, I was sitting telling myself "If only it could put all these pieces together, I'd have had that long ago." And that was it. The first version did very little--just download one file. It's grown a lot since then as people send ideas and suggestions.



In real terms, how successful has Getright been?

More popular than I ever would have guessed :) Just passed 4 Million downloads at Download.com.

I discovered Getright through recommendations from MP3 download sites. Was this coincidental or purposeful marketing?

Word of mouth is the best advertising. Until this year, that was the ONLY advertising GetRight had...my Business New Years Resolution was to start buying some banner ads. :)

Does it bug you knowing that many users get their registration code from Serialz sites/programs?

A bit...tho there are some people who will never pay, no matter what. They're the ones to go searching for code numbers. The ones to try and find are those that would pay, but someone else put in a code for them or something like that.

Did Headlight spring from the Getright or did your company come first?

Both at about the same time. Doing it again, might not be Headlight Software...but do like GetRight.

Some people plan and others let their projects evolve naturally. What is your approach?

Evolving naturally, and adding as I go. There are many things that someone said in an email "I wish it did XXX" in the morning and I'd say, "Yep, good idea" and start programming and get it added that day :) And the ideas and requests keep coming--they just keep getting bigger so can't do as many in one day :)

When the aureate system was added to Getright, did you have any idea of the controversy that would later dog that company?

No. And it is really too bad that the boring truth "they're NOT spying or ANYTHING like that" doesn't fly around the Internet as fast as the scary but false rumors.

Any regrets taking that approach?

Not really; such a small percent of people do register, advertising has been a good way to make money from all the people who use GetRight but don't pay. Shareware works to get your program used by a lot of people, but doesn't work to get money from everyone using it. If everyone paid for what they use, some "shareware" companies could be as big as Microsoft. (Who doesn't have a copy of WinZip? and years ago, nearly every computer in existence had PKZip) These concerns may have slowed things down for a bit, but I do think a lot of software will go the advertising way.



What programming experience had you had and what do

you do your development work on?

My parents got an Apple 2+ back when it was state of the art, and I started programming immediately. Got a Computer Science degree from Washington State University, and had worked at a big government contractor for just over 5 years before leaving to do GetRight full time. I had done a couple of educational shareware programs as a kid (for the Apple 2) that sold a couple copies and a whiteboard program that sold a couple copies but but I eventually sold the whole thing to one of the Internet Phone programs (tho not one that's succeeded). Used a lot of different languages over the years, but GetRight is written using Visual C++.

In terms of tech, what's sitting on your desk right now?

Typing this mail on a pretty standard Dell Inspiron laptop (Celeron-433) with Win2000, do most email stuff sitting in various coffee shops near my house. Do the programming on an older Gateway (P2-400) with Win98. So the computers themselves aren't that impressive. But do have a real nice SiliconGraphics flat-panel display for programming--if you do any kind of work with words or programming, it's great...can see so much more stuff at the same time. And of course the "Red Dwarf" mousepad.

Would you ever sell out?

Yep :) The price has to be right...and probably would keep working on GetRight too...and still want lots of freedom while doing it.

Any other programs in the future?

Working on some new things...FileFunnel is the working name, tho not saying just what that is or what it does :) Plus just adding more things to GetRight.

What was the last book you didn't finish and why?

Usually if I start a book, I finish it. I can't remember the last one I gave up on. Decided it was time to read a few of the books we're all supposed to have read, but most people haven't. Finished "Atlas Shrugged" a month or so ago. Currently working thru "War and Peace". And read "The Wizard of Oz" between them for something a bit lighter.



Is Netscape or IE more annoying?

They both have their moments. But for everyday use, I use IE.

Is the internet still in its infancy or has it hit the teenage years?

Infancy. A few years ago I never guessed it would do what it has done. There is so much potential for something to come along and change everything...Napster is an excellent example.

Where geographically is your base of operations?

Seattle.

And finally... You're invited to tea with Bill Gates on the same night that Clinton offers to give you a tour of the whitehouse. Which offer do you turn down?

I'd go with the President to tour the Whitehouse. So much more history there.

Thanks for your time Michael. It's deeply appreciated.

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