

Have you tried stretching yourself lately?

The other day scientists at IBM announced that they had discovered a way to “stretch” silicon. The basic idea is simple. Atoms in compounds have a natural tendency to align themselves with each other. Put the silicon on top of another material that has atoms spaced farther apart than the silicon. The silicon atoms stretch to line up with the other material. This “strained silicon” has less electrical resistance, meaning electrons flow as much as seventy percent faster than before. That, in turn, means that IBM can create silicon chips that are up to thirty-five percent faster, while at the same time reducing power requirements.

Organic light-emitting diodes, or OLEDs, use less energy to produce brighter digital displays by utilizing simple laws of nature, as does electronic ink when it capitalizes on the laws of positive and negative fields (see *Coming to a Screen Near You...* on page 56). Nature always seems to find ways to conserve energy and increase output.

Maybe we should take a lesson from Nature.

We human beings are a strange lot, and we creative or artistic human beings are even stranger. We can become so embedded in our habits that we don't recognize when it's time to “stretch” ourselves. We continue to do things the same way, all the while complaining that those things aren't getting any easier to do.

Often the simple fact of nature is that if we just “aligned our atoms” with new materials (or workflows, or software, or even keystrokes), we'd stretch ourselves into sync with our environments and work better, faster—smarter.

But, of course, adapting to a new arrangement of atoms can take time. In IBM's case, they've probably been working on experiments with strained silicon for years. Even so, it will be 2003, another two years, before their work is integrated into commercial product applications.

In the case of designers (or publishers), inertia can have the same effect. Learn an application, make it work, stick to what you know—and ignore upgrades, both digital and mental. Or develop a style, make it work, and never bother to experiment with anything new. But if silicon atoms can stretch, why can't we?

Sometimes it's just a matter of education. Often it's experience, the best teacher of all, that moves our atoms for us through necessity.

However, we have one sizeable advantage over mere atoms. We know how to share our knowledge and experience. IBM was doing precisely that at the June Symposium on VLSI Technology in Kyoto, Japan where they presented technical papers on their work with silicon microchips. And we at GRAPHIC EXCHANGE try our best to do the same.

Art for art's sake is sacred and noble, and ne'er should we lose sight of its value. But art for a paying client—well, that's a quark of a different color.

As Kirby Ferguson opines on page 10, there are *Things They Never Taught You in Art School* that could save time and headaches, not just for you but also for the faceless others who try to follow your electronic path. Learn to do things right and don't let bad habits prevent you from stretching to improve your output.



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Leave it to Sony to introduce a Slimtop Pen Tablet that allows you to paint, sketch, erase and draw using a stylus and your Slimtop screen in the same way you would use a pen and a pad. All with the freedom a mouse could never give you. The dual hinge LCD screen lets you use it flat or upright. But, unlike a pad, this Pen Tablet also lets

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Publisher's Notes

If you do graphic design, you must use type. If you use type, you must respect the rules of typography. And if you don't respect the rules of typography, then you must read *Diggin It* on page 16 by type expert Nick Shinn.

Words and pictures—these are the raw materials from which pages are constructed. Pictures can be moved and manipulated almost atom by atom, especially if one knows how to use *Photoshop* and a scanner.

But scanning pictures requires a good working knowledge of dots, spots, pixels and lines, and the fundamentals can be complicated and somewhat arbitrary. Having a primer to refer to such as *PPI, DPI, LPI and Color Depth Unravelled* by Lidka Schuch should be considered invaluable. The solutions for good scans lie on page 24 and beyond.

Words and pictures inevitably need to be printed. One option is the Xerox Phaser 790 color laser printer, which we look at in detail on page 54 in *Positive proof for laser color in the workflow*.

And when pictures move and become digital video, it's time to read what Bob Connolly has learned. *DV—Has It Ever Been Simpler?* Probably not—if you study page 30.

However a substantial part of atom-stretching involves being familiar with the capabilities of new software tools—or even not-so-new software. We offer an assortment of views and reviews this time around, ranging from Jay Nelson's peek at how *QuarkXPress 5* might stack up against *Adobe InDesign 2* (in his Special Report on page 40—*Major conundrum pending: InDesign 2 or QuarkX-Press 5?*), to Lerrick Starr's dissection of current PDF creation software on page 44 (*PDF toolsets evolve, PDF workflow matures*), including *Adobe Acrobat 5* and *CreoScitex's new Synapse*.

Organizing your atoms systematically is also important. Shane Steinman realigned his entire library of discs after learning *Extensis' new version 5 of Portfolio*, as he lustily describes on page 50 in *Can you locate that file immediately? Yes, MAM!*

And the visual wonder of 3D art comes alive once again on page 46 where Ron Giddings updates us on *Curious Labs' new Poser Pro Pack*—with pictures, of course.

Sometimes it's the things we never thought of that trigger electronic reformation. For instance, when I read *How to Make Interactive Presentations Without All the Lingo*, Jason Lee and Bob Connolly's investigation into using *Acrobat 5* for fullblown multimedia and Web-based presentations (page 34), what fascinated me most was how they had uncovered a hitherto unrecognized benefit to *InDesign*—not as an alternative to *QuarkXPress* but rather as a replacement for page assembly in *Macromedia Director*.

Art for art's sake? Or art for gain's sake?

Actually, it's your choice. Either one could win both prizes and prestige in the GRAPHIC EXCHANGE DIGITAL ART AWARDS contest (details on page 32) which accompanies our upcoming tenth anniversary. We'll be updating our prize list regularly, so keep checking www.gxo.com for news and revisions.

And with that, it's time for me to make like an atom—and split.

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