These are conversations and debates with Go2Zero supporters. Alan Dechert is the creator of the Global Era Calendar which he hoped would be used starting this year to eliminate the religious connotations of our current AD/BC system, and begin with Year 0, so all the millennia and centuries begin in the "0" year, such as 2000, instead of the current 2001 year. The first 4 files that are primarily posts from me and Alan. Files 5 and 6 contain posts from other people, as well as myself about this and other related subjects. My correspondence is in **Bold** lettering, people other than Alan are in Blue.

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Subject: Re: Problems of having a Zero Year
Date: 01/21/2000
Author: bjwyler <bjwyler@my-deja.com>
It seems you put a lot of emphasis on credentials. However, I have seen many people who have more "credentials" than myself and other people, yet have the common sense of a rock, aside from the fact that it seems honorary doctorates in many subjects are handed out like chocolate in a candy factory. I have met those that I thought were completely stupid, yet found something from them I could learn. I have seen studies on autistic people who have no credentials whatsoever, yet could put many to shame in many different fields of study, including mathematics. BTW, I completed, successfully, several geometry and algebra courses during my schooling, even though math was my least favorite subject, and while not as advanced as your math education, much more advanced than you give me credit for. If everyone had the same credentials, the world would be a boring place, and the jobs wouldn't pay a whole lot, would they? That's why people specialize and why people attempt to learn from one another.

In regard to Slider's post, the only information I can glean from it is that I am long-winded, which is something I already knew, therefore, there was no useful information contained with which I could increase my paltry knowledge, and since my long-windedness was so obvious, all the other intelligent people who use this board would be able to glean that information without Slider having to point it out.

I am a "newbie" to Usenet. Most of my posting has been on AOL, and various message boards available on web sites. As for what I do, I do it because I enjoy it. Not because I am not qualified to do anything else, but because I found something I liked doing for several reasons, and it paid pretty damn good to boot. Compared to the life I would have to live for years while crawling my way to the top in other jobs, I have no regrets, and certainly would not change anything I have done. This is but one project I am involved in, none of which I do for publicity or recognition, although when it comes, such as with the Real Millennium Group, I accept it. I do these things because I enjoy doing them. Many of them, such as the RMG, don't bring in extra money, and some cost me a few cents, but as long as I enjoy doing it, I will continue. Others, like writing theses, short stories, and the like, can bring me recognition and credentials, if ever I stop my self-doubting and procrastinating long enough to take a shot at publication. As for lumping me in with the media moguls, I must protest -- if I thought like them, the RMG would not exist.

I looked over my other posts, and did not see where I claimed to be an authority on anything I was not. The basic principles of math and science are routinely taught in school, and one does not need a doctorate to refer to them, and anyone who knows that 2 + 2 = 4 can pontificate on that subject as much as they want. After all, isn't that the whole basis of our educational system; the

same system that educated you? I remember having only one or two teachers for a wide range of subjects for each grade. Are you saying that teachers and professors have no business imparting that knowledge if they don't have a degree or credential in each and every field?

I have also seen many articles in my local papers, and know a few third graders myself, and when it came to all this millennium talk, many were as confused as I, since to quote them - "we start counting at one." I tend to use hyperbole, mostly for facetious reasons, and when I am wrong, I admit I am wrong -- in reference to the part of John's post I referred to, I understood what he was saying quite well, but thought that the "nuisance" part was referring to our basic counting system, and not to computer science, since he followed that statement by saying that many scientists count real world objects starting with zero as well, by force of habit.

I also don't attack someone's character or intelligence because of what they do or know (well, OK, maybe once in a while). You are very qualified, it appears, in the field of computer science. However, will that help you tell me on what day Joan of Arc was burned at the stake, and what impact that had on the monarchies of France and England? How did the signing of the Magna Carta change the face of the world we live in today? I am qualified to talk on subjects such as these, you are not, despite all of your credentials, especially since you seem to have forgotten, or not known the "year of our Lord" reference is a translation from the Latin anno Domini. I am not Christian either, but to change the meaning of a word or phrase because is does not apply to me is rather childish, and too P.C. for my taste.

To use a cliche, but one that still applies, those who ignore history are doomed to repeat it. So the fact that we now use zero as a numeral, when past civilizations did not, does not make their contributions, or methods of mathematics, any less significant to us today. So much information has been lost to us forever due to tragedies such as the destruction of the Library at Alexandria, that mankind may be technically behind where we should be by centuries.

I did want to make one point, but had forgotten to add it to the last post, which was that I am in complete favor of a new calendar system. The inaccuracies and changes made to the current calendars in use (many not for the benefit of telling time either), have made it necessary. The proposed World Calendar of 1961 is an example of a slightly easier and more accurate calendar, yet here we are, nearly 40 years later, and we are still using a 400+ year old calendar. We must remember, any type of calendar developed, based on the motions of a heavenly body, will end up needing corrections since the motions of the universe are slowing down.

Again, you have corrected me on the uses of mathematics when applied to computer science, but you have not yet helped me to understand how an advanced science can be applied to a simple science. Examples like the baseball game are analogous with how we count years on our current calendar, yet you completely ignored that in favor of spouting your credentials in the computer sciences, and my lack of them, as you did the fact that by starting with zero, you would have to give me 101 singles for my 100 dollar bill. You also seem to avoid the matter of starting your year zero with month 1 and day 1, when months and days are reckoned the exact same way our years currently are. I certainly know counting can be applied to any set, such as the examples you gave, just as my first cat is Gandalf, my second cat is Willy, and my third cat is Shadow, I can even reverse the cats in the count, and that would have no effect, aside from the fact it would be chronologically incorrect. But when I count them, I count them as 1, 2, 3. Just as if we count a dozen eggs -- there are 12 to a set (just as there are 12 months to a year), when we reach the third set, we have 36 eggs but there are still ONLY THREE SETS, and each one by dictionary

definition of first, second, and third, will be labeled 1, 2, 3. Your first anniversary is in 1990 -- how many anniversaries do you have? -- 1. Your second anniversary is in 1991 -- how many do you have now? -- 2. Our basic definition of these numerals precludes giving the label of zero to an existing item in the count, be it a physical apple, an inning in a baseball game, or the man-made label for a specified amount of time.

Time is a scalar quantity as you put it. However, our method of "cataloguing" it is discrete. Getting out that nasty little dictionary again: discrete - 1. Separate and distinct, 2. Made up of distinct parts. So, for the benefit of recording events as they happen along the timeline, we break up the infinite scale of time into separate parts to differentiate one event from another, meaning that the chronology of the calendar system is discrete (zero was accepted and taught as part of our numerology when the Gregorian Calendar was developed. How come they didn't start each month with 0?). Indeed, as you say, zero is important mathematically -- it allows us to differentiate from having nothing (zero) and having something (one, five, or a hundred), of being able to have an infinite numbering system with only 10 symbols, and being able to develop a binary math system, among many other uses. Despite my lesser mathematical aptitude, however, I still know when I need to apply a geometric formula, and when simple arithmetic is called for.

Until you can tell me how I can hold an apple in my hand, and say I have zero apples in my hand, based on our discrete counting system, and the definitions that apply to our numbers as they are described in any dictionary, then I cannot support year zero. Since you have yet to do so, and until you can answer my questions, I will continue to write posts that you must surely feel are a waste of space and time, until you do. I do this not to be argumentative, but because of my desire to learn, and my need to understand that which I do not understand. If you feel that makes me foolish, a fake, or unintelligent, then I fear that reflects more badly upon your character than it does mine, and our world is in a sad state when intelligence like yours is wasted in such a manner.

Subject: Re: Problems of having a Zero Year
Date: 01/21/2000
Author: adechert <adechert@my-deja.com>
<<... I have seen studies on autistic people who have no credentials whatsoever, yet could put many to shame in many different fields of study, including mathematics. >>
I see.

<<.. If everyone had the same credentials, the world would be a boring place, and the jobs wouldn't pay a whole lot, would they?>>
Gosh! Interesting.

<<... the only information I can glean from it is that I am long-winded, which is something I already knew, >>
Long-winded, yes you are.

<<I am a "newbie" to Usenet. Most of my posting has been on AOL, and various message boards available on web sites.>>
I see. You are a newbie. I thought so.

<<.. Are you saying that teachers and professors have no business imparting that knowledge if they don't have a degree or credential in each and every field?>>
No. I said you are not qualified to lecture me in science, math, or computers. I meant that. I still mean

that. It is true.

<<...when I am wrong, I admit I am wrong -- in reference to the part of John's post I referred to...>>
I'm glad to see that you realize that you were wrong. You didn't read what he said very carefully.

Of course I'm well aware of the meaning of "Anno Domini." And if you'd read the references I suggested, you'd know that. In the context of the remark, it appeared to me that you were referring to "your" Lord. On that point I stand corrected. If you say you are "not Christian" I accept that. Good for you, if fact. However, do not feel obligated to explain your religion.... please.

Ironically, I don't agree that there would be any advantage to the "World Calendar" or any other calendar proposal I've seen. Despite some idiosyncracies, the present world-standard civil calendar is perfectly suitable (BTW, it's not quite accurate to call it "Gregorian" since only 4 countries went along with the Pope's orders back in 1582... what we have is a Gregorian-compatible, or Gregorian work-alike calendar). The only thing that really needs to be changed is the year numbering.

Even though my own Global Era Calendar Resolution
(http://www.deja.com/[ST_artlink=www.go2zero.com]/jump/http://www.go2zero.com/gecalres.htm)
proffers an improvement to the leap-year scheme, we really don't have enough information to say how much better it would be. In any case, it will not be very significant for some thousands of years.

I'll summarize this into a "pocket reference" that you can carry around and refer to whenever you get confused about this again.
1. "First" does not have to refer to item no. "one." The "first" could be item 42, or 1990, or zero, or just about anything else.
2. While zero is not often an ordinal in common use, it can be used this way and *is* used in this way--especially in computer science.
3. Time (like distance) is a scalar quantity. With scalars, we assign an arbitrary Zero point. The first unit from the zero point spans the zero unit. When a baby is born, its first year can be called the year zero for the baby. Likewise, on the 24 hour clock, the first hour is the zero hour. This is perfectly consistent with the proposed use of a Year Zero for the calendar.
4. If the idea of beginning a new epoch this year became very popular, it would not be wise to call it the "year one" (i.e., 2000=year 1). There are several reasons this would be unwise, mostly having to do with the fact that parallel use of the old and new systems would be problematic (remember, computers still commonly display years with 2 digits...so distinguishing between 01 and 00 of the old and new systems would be impossible). But beyond that, it would perpetuate several conceptual and computational problems that exist with the present system. The most common would be the lack of synchronization between the various popular and scientific notions of when decades, centuries, and millennia begin. Another problem has to do with calculation of years across the epoch boundary. For example, what if you ask someone, "how many years would it be from a point on the calendar in 3 B.C. to the same point in 3 A.D.? A lot of people would automatically say "6." Of course, that is wrong. The answer is "5" because there was no zero year between these years. Likewise, it would always be a problem computing ages if we called 2000 "One." For example, how old would a child born in 1997 be in the year 3? Again, a lot of people would want to say "6." But, as before, the correct answer would actually be "5."
--Alan Dechert
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