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i Think, Therefore i Am

Even though my family's home computers have all been DOS- or Windows-based PCs, I spend most of my day writing and editing on a Mac. When the *CEP* editorial office switched to Macs in the early 1990s, it took me some time to get used to the new way of working (with a mouse) and to switching between platforms. But after a few years, I was hooked. By the time I was ready to get my own computer, I was a big fan of Macs, and I bought a MacBook laptop. I will say, however, that I've never owned an iPod (although I did put music from CDs onto my laptop), and as much as I wanted an iPhone, I didn't buy one when it was first introduced.

This summer, I took two big plunges — I bought an iPad, and shortly thereafter an iPhone. Wow — I hadn't realized what I was missing. Now I'm having loads of fun with them — reading newspapers and books, playing (just a few favorite) games, and exploring the wide world of apps. I have dozens of apps (most of them free, although I did splurge and buy a few really good ones) that handle tasks ranging from making my grocery list and shopping, to browsing the menu at my favorite cupcake store, to setting the DVR to record.

My iPad and iPhone came in handy at the recent AICHE Annual Meeting. I used the Personal Scheduler function on the AICHE conference site (<http://aiche.confex.com/aiche/2011/schedule/index.cgi>) to browse the program and identify sessions I wanted to attend, then all I needed to keep track of my itinerary was the smartphone in my jacket pocket; I didn't have to lug around the 452-page, 3.12-lb program book. Instead of printing pages and pages of materials that I would need, before I left the office I saved the files to the cloud, then opened them on my iPad in Minneapolis; I've never carried such a light backpack. I also saved articles I was working on and manuscripts I was reviewing to the cloud, and worked on them on-screen instead of with pencil and paper. And while I was at the meeting, I took notes on my iPad, and forwarded them to colleagues directly from my Notes app.

AICHE and the CACHE* Corp. will sponsor an app-development competition for which undergraduate student chapter teams, ideally in collaboration with students in other disciplines, will create a mobile-device app that would be useful for an AICHE member. The competition aims to give students practice at developing their creative skills; promote interest in new mobile-device apps for use in professional activities; provide students an opportunity to participate in a multidisciplinary team-oriented software design competition; encourage students to become actively involved in their professional society; and show the connection between chemical engineering and society's needs. The tentative deadline for submissions is June 1, 2012, and teams will make poster presentations at the 2012 Annual Meeting in Pittsburgh in October. The team with the best app will receive a \$500 award from CACHE, and the app that best addresses safety will receive a \$500 prize sponsored by Honeywell.

The committee is still working out the details of the contest and will post more information when it becomes available on the AICHE Student Chapters website (www.aiche.org/Students/Chapters/index.aspx).

Good luck, and may the best teams win!

Cynthia F. Mascone (aka iCndy), Editor-in-Chief

* CACHE, which stands for Computer Aids for Chemical Engineering, is a nonprofit organization that promotes cooperation among universities, industry, and government in the development and distribution of computer-related and/or technology-based educational aids.

