Introduction

By [Lynellen D. S. Perry](#)

Object Oriented Programming is more than a buzzword, despite the wave of media attention over the last handful of years. To be a computer scientist in today's world, you need to at least understand the OOP perspective, the different way of analyzing a problem domain. OOP can be powerful when it is used correctly, or it can be just another mess of spaghetti for others to maintain. The OOP feature articles in this issue of *Crossroads* will educate you on the concept of design patterns and demonstrate one method that can help students learn object oriented design and programming.

You may notice several changes in Crossroads, beginning with this issue. Issue 5.1 is the first part of our fifth year of publication. ACM Crossroads was the first electronic publication from the Association for Computing Machinery, and Crossroads is the only by-students, for-students publication in the ACM. To celebrate our fifth year of publication, the Crossroads editorial board has re-organized the magazine to follow the convention of placing feature articles behind reviews and columns. Crossroads hopes to expand the size of the magazine (from 32 pages to 48 pages) during the 1999-2000 school year, and will be raising money toward this by having more advertising in the magazine. The editorial board hired Neal Shaw as Business Manager to oversee these fundraising efforts. Wendy Edwards was hired as Graphics Editor, Kim Moorman was hired as Publicity Manager, and Scott Lewandowski was hired as Copy Editor. The editorial board is now larger than it has ever been before, and we are accordingly getting a lot more work done for the magazine. Another Crossroads goal is to print in full color throughout the magazine. We also want to expand readership, and are working with ACM headquarters to offer stand-alone subscriptions to Crossroads that are not part of the student membership bundle. Crossroads will continue to be a default part of the student membership package. Finally, we hope to have an online Spanish version of Crossroads for each issue in the future. To fulfill this vision, we need people who are fluent in both English and Spanish to carry out the translation. Email Crossroads if you can help.

The Crossroads website is more than just an online version of the magazine! Yes, all of the back issues are available for free online. If you haven't stopped by recently, we invite you to surf on over. Use the on-site search engine if you're doing research for a paper--Crossroads might have published an article that will help you out! Check out the online bookstore, in association with Amazon.com. The bookstore features links to books that have been reviewed in Crossroads, books that have been recommended by our readers, and an opportunity for you to recommend books to other Crossroads readers. Crossroads also boasts half a dozen interactive discussion bulletin boards for articles that consistently receive a large number of hits each day.

During the five years we've been producing Crossroads, over 100 students have been published. We want to add you to our list of published authors. See the Participation area of our website for issue

themes, detailed calls for articles, and other opportunities to write for Crossroads. Spring 1999 will be about Computer Architecture, and Summer 1999 will feature Intelligent Agents. We regularly need help screening and reviewing submitted articles. If you want to help with this effort, send us email at crossroads@acm.org. Enjoy the issue, surf our website, and we'll see you again in the winter issue!