Book Review: Delphi 2 Developers' Solutions
by Nathan Wallace and Steve Tendon

I'm a big fan of Question/Answer books: they offer something of "real world" value to people who work with Delphi and have problems along the way. It helps when you have one or more Q/A books available where you can look up a similar problem and find a solution and explanation. That's why I was thrilled when *Delphi How-To*, the first Q/A book for Delphi, was published.

Despite the title, however, the book is not for Delphi 2 only. It was initially written for Delphi 1, but by the time it was almost done, Delphi 2 was almost available, so the code and text had to be modified to support Delphi 1 and 2 (a few of the components on the CD-ROM are still only for Delphi 1). I'm not sure if this works well, since some of the potential Win32 problems one can experience with Delphi 2 are not mentioned in this book (things that did turn up in Neil Rubenking's *Delphi Programming Problem Solver*, currently my favourite Delphi book!).

Like *Delphi How-To*, the book consists of a number of problems and solutions, grouped together in 11 chapters. Topics are (numbers in brackets are the number of items in each topic): Utilities (3), Files and Directories (9), Keyboard and Mouse (10), Printers and Printing (8), Help and Help Files (5), Graphics and Images (5), Local Database Programming (8), Client/Server Database Programming (5), Internet I: Winsock & FTP (10), Internet II: Usenet News and UUcode (9), and Internet III: Pop3/SMTP E-mail & MIME (6). They make up a total of 78 Q/As (not 80-plus which is mentioned in the introduction). Some of these are numbered a little unnaturally (Chapter 9, for example, spends 8 Q/As on the same FTP component, adding a different feature every time, and the same holds for the newsgroup code in Chapter 10). Still, all in all, a wide variety of topics. The level of the Q/As differs from topic to topic: most are at intermediate level, although some can be found in the Delphi manuals as well (how to write design-time component help), some are more advanced or low-level (such as the winsock import unit, which really didn't need to be printed on 52 pages, including the .DFM file listing!).

I have had this book for over 2 months now. I decided to leave writing the review a while to see if the book would have the same impact as *Delphi How-To* or *Delphi Programming Problem Solver*. While people initially fought over *Delphi How-To* and my company had to order extra copies of *Delphi Programming Problem Solver*, the *Delphi 2 Developers' Solutions* book is somehow not as popular. Maybe because Delphi 2.01 now ships with Netmanage ActiveX internet components which make Chapters 9 to 11 less urgent topics. Still, it's a solid Q/A book with many interesting topics. Just not as urgently needed as the first Q/A books.

Apart from the complete source code (which take up 400 pages in the book!), the CD-ROM also contains the Delphi Cheat Sheet plus a few Delphi components and goodies. A fix for the FTP binary download did not make it to the CD-ROM, but can be found on the website. The same is true for some other components that were mentioned in the book but are not on the CD.

Delphi 2 Developers' Solutions is not a bad book. The Q/A format is very useful. At $59.99 this book is far more expensive than the other two similar Delphi books I have and it's certainly not the best – I expect more from the upcoming *Delphi FAQs* by Mike 'DTOPICS' Orriss.

Scores out of 5:

Technical Contents	4
Quality of Writing	3
Value for Money	3
Overall Assessment	3