

# CAROCP Market Watch

(A Monthly Trends & Forecasting Report)  
February 2006

## **TIME OFF** *(All Sectors)*

Amid signs that time can be as precious as money to many workers, employers are overhauling their time-off policies. In a tight labor market, time off is increasingly valuable as a recruiting and retention tool. In a recent poll, more than one-fourth of workers said they would take a pay cut to get more time off. Some companies are allowing bosses to hand out extra paid days off as a performance bonus in addition to cash performance rewards. Some are consolidating vacation time, sick time, personal days, holiday and volunteer leave into a single "paid time off" category which is easier to monitor. This also removes any incentive for employees to lie about being sick in order to get a day off. [The Orange County Register](#), January 16, 2006

## **FROM PROTECTION TO PREVENTION** *(Transportation)*

More than 42,000 people die annually on the nation's highways, a number pushing automakers, safety advocates and others to make driving safer. There is a shift from just focusing on crash protection to going towards preventing a crash. Some of the advances deal with what automakers call "active safety," which involves technology used to keep drivers out of danger and help them anticipate problems. The upgrades are mostly limited to luxury models for now but could offer a glimpse of the future, much the same way that airbags evolved in the marketplace.

Continental Automotive Systems has worked with several automakers on "intelligent" systems that use radar to address the potential danger of a crash, allowing a car to detect how quickly it's coming up on the vehicle in front of it and adjust its speed to avoid rear-ending it. In the event of a potential crash, a signal or beep might warn a motorist, tighten the seat belt to put the person in a safer position, ready the brakes and instantly close the sunroof or windows to prevent someone from being thrown from the vehicle. Nissan has a lane departure warning system that addresses the high number of fatalities when cars drift off the road or into other lanes. [The Orange County Register](#), January 11, 2006

## **THE BLENDING OF RETAIL AND ENTERTAINMENT** *(Marketing, Sales, and Service and Arts, Entertainment, and Media Technology)*

Celebrities promoting their newest movie, book or album have a new stop on the talk-show circuit: Amazon.com. The Internet megastore plans to host a weekly online talk show called [Amazon Fishbowl](#) with Bill Maher. Amazon.com is trying to blend commerce with entertainment, much as Starbucks Corp. sells CDs and DVDs alongside coffee to position its brand as a lifestyle. In an e-commerce twist,

Amazon will place links to buy the works discussed during the show beside the program's display window.

"Fishbowl" will follow a standard talk-show format with interviews with guests and musical performances. The show won't include commercial interruptions, but Amazon and UPS will show a "special delivery" of an Amazon order by a celebrity, as when Harrison Ford hand-delivers a [Star Wars Trilogy](#) DVD to a customer in Wyoming.

The company is betting that some of the nearly 50 million people who visit it each month to shop will take a few minutes to watch the show. The question is whether they will buy the books, songs and movies they are promoting. [The Los Angeles Times](#), January 19, 2006

### **THE eBay OF PROGRAMMERS** *(Information Technology)*

The owner of a software development firm in Florida was inundated with requests for modifications every time he released a new program. He recognized that people had small software projects that they needed to get done but they didn't have access to good programmers and consequently Rent A Coder was born. In just over three years, the site – sort of an eBay for software projects – has exploded, attracting a cumulative 45,000 buyers who've posted projects and 121,000 coders around the globe offering to take on work. Rent A Coder isn't without rivals; Elance.com and ScriptLance offer similar services. These networks aren't just for programmers anymore – there's work for Web designers, translators, proofreaders, and writers.

Posting a project on Rent A Coder is free, as is bidding on it. Once the work gets assigned, the buyer puts the project cost into escrow; when the programming is done, the developer gets paid, less a Rent A Coder fee of between 7.5% and 15%. As on eBay, both parties can rate each other at the end of a transaction. [Fast Company](#), January/February 2006

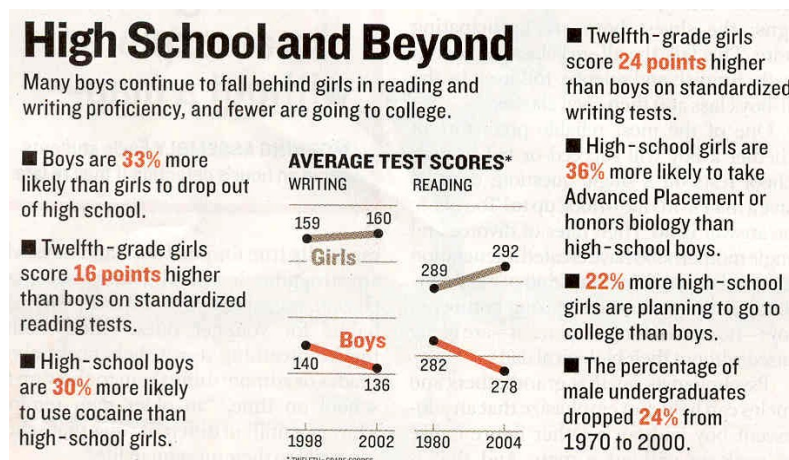
### **THE TROUBLE WITH BOYS** *(Education, Child Development and Family Services)*

By almost every benchmark, boys across the nation and in every demographic group are falling behind. Thirty years ago men represented 58 percent of the undergraduate student body. Now they're the minority at 44 percent. This widening achievement gap has profound implications for the economy, society, families and democracy.

The problem won't be solved overnight. In the last two decades, the education system has become obsessed with a quantifiable and narrowly defined kind of success that experts say is harmful to boys. Boys are biologically, developmentally, and psychologically different from girls and teachers need to learn how to bring out the best in everyone. Curricula have become more rigid.

Instead of allowing teachers to instruct kids in the manner and pace that suit each class, some states now tell teachers, what, when and how to teach. At the same time, student-teacher ratios have risen, physical education and sports programs have been cut and recess is a distant memory. These new pressures are undermining the strengths and underscoring the limitations of what psychologists call the “boy brain” – the kinetic, disorganized, maddening and sometimes brilliant behaviors that scientists now believe are not learned but hard-wired.

The transition to middle school is especially difficult because boys will do almost anything to avoid admitting that they’re overwhelmed. Boys measure everything they do or say by a single yardstick: does this make me look weak? That’s part of the reason that video games have such a powerful hold on boys: the action is constant, they can calibrate just how hard the challenges will be and, when they lose, the defeat is private. [Newsweek](#), January 30, 2006



### MOVING BEYOND ‘SHOOT ‘EM UP’ (Information Technology)

As the video game market matures, “serious” games are beginning to win advocates, who see them as great teaching tools. Creating a video game can be expensive; popular games can cost \$3 million to \$20 million to develop. Serious games, which have proved to be popular and effective, can be made for a fraction of that cost, but the business model for how to pay for games that promote good causes is unclear. Serious games are only in their infancy, comparable to the silent movies of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century or the early television of the 1940s and ‘50s. It’s predicted that eventually people using video games will no more be labeled “gamers” than people today who listen to music are labeled “listeners.” Some of the serious games include:

*Food Force*, a free online game from the United Nations World Food Program, sends children ages 8 to 13 on six realistic aid missions.

*America's Army*, a recruiting tool for the U.S. Army, has more than 6.3 million online players and will shortly become available on home game systems.

*Incident Commander*, developed after 9/11 for the Department of Justice, trains first responders on local emergencies such as a school shooting, hostage crisis, or chemical spill. This game will be sent free of charge to 30,000 small towns and cities.

*Free Dive*, a scuba-diving simulator is so involved that it has lessened the pain of gravely ill children who play it while undergoing medical treatment. [USATODAY.com](http://USATODAY.com), December 21, 2005

**E-TUTORING** (*Education, Child Development and Family Services and Information Technology*)

On-line tutoring has made it possible for a learner in the United States to log on to a tutoring site in India and get connected to an Indian mathematics tutor. Both can discuss the problems that the student is facing by chatting or "writing" over a WhiteBoard. The student also has the option of faxing or mailing their difficulties in advance or they can seek an on-line appointment with the tutor. This has become easier with the development of the Stylus Pen, a hardware device that acts like a mouse, but is shaped like a pen. While there are already a few U.S. players in the e-tutoring market, Indian companies with their price advantage and huge pool of highly qualified teachers are attracting U.S. students. [The Financial Express.com](http://TheFinancialExpress.com), December 30, 2005

**DON'T CHECK YOUR BAGS** (*Hospitality, Tourism and Recreation*)

Will free checked luggage go the way of airline meals? Maybe so, if ideas from the lobbying group Coalition for Luggage Security fly. The proposal is for a parcel carrier to pick up your bags from home and then ship them, separately, to your destination. For more information on why this may be safer and simpler for fliers, log on to [luggagesecuritycoalition.com](http://luggagesecuritycoalition.com). [SHAPE](http://SHAPE), February 2006

**ECHO-CHIC** (*Fashion and Interior Design*)

Finally, it's chic to be green. Call it clothing with conscience, style with substance. Today, you can find eco-friendly fashion not just at the neighborhood co-op, but also at Barney's, Saks Fifth Avenue, trendy boutiques, and on the runways. The idea behind the "echofashion" movement is to produce garments with a sense of ethics, by using organic materials and fabrics, seeking out humane factories and working conditions, involving local communities and governments through co-ops or other work structures, and promoting free trade.

By 2006, the nonprofit organization, Sustainable Style Foundation, hopes to launch their "seal of approval," a rating system that will denote how a particular garment has incorporated sustainability in the areas of human rights, environment,

diversity, governance, and community involvement. Designers may choose to put the SSF seal on their hangtag, or sew it right into the label. [Southwest Airlines SPIRIT](#), January 2006

### **HAND AND FOOT DETAILING FOR MEN** *(Marketing, Sales, and Service)*

There are a growing number of salons devoted to men who want more than just a barbershop haircut but don't feel comfortable sitting in women's beauty salons and wouldn't be caught dead entering a froufrou day spa. From the décor to the terminology, men's salons are seeking to put some distance between themselves and beauty salons. Some have sports themes, some offer free beer, while some allow clients to light up cigars.

Steering clear of feminine terms, one chain of salons called the American Male has dubbed manicures and pedicures "hand and foot detailing"; covering one's gray is called "camouflage." Prices for haircuts, waxing, manicures, pedicures, facials, shaving and massages start at about \$20.00. [The Los Angeles Times](#), January 4, 2006

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#### California State Standards for Career and Technical Education (CTE)

##### Industry Sectors

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|---|---|
| 1. Agriculture and Natural Resources                | 9. Health Science and Medical Technology  |
| 2. Arts, Media, and Entertainment Technology        | 10. Hospitality, Tourism and Recreation   |
| 3. Building Trades and Construction                 | 11. Information Technology                |
| 4. Education, Child Development and Family Services | 12. Manufacturing and Product Development |
| 5. Energy and Utilities                             | 13. Marketing, Sales, and Service         |
| 6. Engineering and Design                           | 14. Public Services                       |
| 7. Fashion and Interior Design                      | 15. Transportation                        |
| 8. Finance and Business                             |   |

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