

## Fun With Widgets

by Betsy Balgooyen, Senior Project Manager

**Don't you sometimes wish you had a personal assistant to remind you to brush your teeth, or let you know what the temperature is outside so you know if you need that scarf on your lunch break?**

All of this can be accomplished with a new type of interactive online media rapidly growing in popularity—the Widget.

### What's a Widget?

A Widget is a software program that has been created for a single purpose and runs from your desktop or from a website. Some popular Widgets are practical, like a constant stock ticker, and others are just plain fun—like Oblique, which displays random questions and thought-provoking suggestions. The key to Widgets is to keep it simple and focused. They can be designed to be interactive or just to display information. They can be maps or calculators, calendars or translators. Remembering Widgets are useful for a single focused purpose.

Adding an interactive piece with pizzazz, like a Widget, can be used to keep visitors interested in your site. Even more effective is something a visitor can download that reminds them about you and your site on a daily basis. One of the most well known examples of this is the weather bug from [weather.com](http://weather.com)—it displays the current weather in the lower right corner of your screen.

Widgets are convenient, as they run directly on a user's desktop, meaning users will see the branding and message you have created every time they open their computer or go to their desktop, rather than requiring them to visit a website or open an email. As a user views the Widget daily, your message becomes more familiar and they will remember your company more often. The weather bug is a good example of



The Dental Diary desktop widget from [KnowYourTeeth.com](http://KnowYourTeeth.com)

this. The Weather Channel logo is displayed at all times and the user becomes use to checking in with the Weather Channel from their computer.

While reflecting on work we have accomplished over the previous year, the Dental Diary Widget we created for the Academy of General Dentistry (AGD) comes to mind. It served as a unique addition to a website that keeps visitors returning to [www.knowyourteeth.com](http://www.knowyourteeth.com). It provides reminders of upcoming dental (and even non-dental appointments) for every member of the family. It is easy to use and engaging—especially since it is in the shape of a tooth. The Widget also contains links back to the web site and a table of contents linking to relevant articles to encourage visits to the web site. [Visit the site](#) and [download the Dental Diary](#) today for a great example of a Widget in action.

*Betsy Balgooyen is the senior project manager working with websites and Internet fun.*

*Quicksilver has been designing interactive websites since 2000 for clients ranging from prestige cruise lines to medical diagnostic companies to associations with business and medical foci. [Click here](#) to learn how our end-to-end Internet solutions integrate your strategy with our design and technology capabilities to make your Web presence a highly productive and valuable tool for communications and marketing or [contact our sales team](#) for more information.*