

Re: How to find the greatest of two numbers without using the comparison operators?

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Source: <http://coding.derkeiler.com/Archive/Cobol/comp.lang.cobol/2007-09/msg00016.html>

- *From:* "Pete Dashwood" <dashwood@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Sat, 1 Sep 2007 16:20:09 +1200
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<docdwarf@xxxxxxxx> wrote in message [news:fbae5i\\$rnus1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:news:fbae5i$rnus1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)

In article <5jrnp5F10st0U1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>, Pete Dashwood <dashwood@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

[snip]

Sadly, as is often the case today, the OP simply picked up a solution from someone who was happy to provide it, without really bothering to think about it.

It seems to me that thinking is no longer "fashionable" and solutions via the line of least resistance are more the order of the day.

Ahhhhhh, for the Oldene Dayse, when a thinker could think things such as *ten* thinkers cannot, today!

In my experience, Mr Dashwood – and it has already been acknowledged that our experiences are, at times, rather different – then, as now, there were folks who would take the 'easy way' and others who agreed with Socrates that 'xalapa ta kala' (difficult/harsh/not easy (are) the good/beautiful/noble (things)).

[snip]

Around four thousand years ago, before the distractions and pressures of modern life, TV, movies, travel, entertainment... people used to think.

They also used to die a bit earlier.

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(Human brains are quite well adapted for this...) They worked out the distance from the Earth to the Sun just by sticking sticks in the sand on a beach and observing the shadows. This calculation was correct to within 5%.

Eh? I believe you are referring to Eratosthenes calculation of the earth's circumference... and that was closer to 2,500 years ago, not four millennia.

Nope. I was not referring to Eratosthenes at all. Had I been, I would have said so.

Not that it matters, but I was referring to the same people who, 5000 years ago gave us the current 365 day calendar (based on their astronomical observations), built instruments to measure time and angles around 4500 years ago, documented over 40 constellations which could be used for navigation 3300 years ago, had many of their accomplishments claimed by Greeks, (who they influenced immensely...Aristotle acknowledged their superior Astronomical achievements and Pythagoras was tutored by them), and passed down across thousands of years, through their closed Priesthood, knowledge that was lost, destroyed (Clement of Alexandria documented at least four of their books on Astronomy that were in the famous library), and then re-discovered centuries later.

No more clues... do your own homework. :-)

Pete.

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"I used to write COBOL...now I can do anything."

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