Whatever Happened to Peter Denning

Then	Capsule Summary	Now
 Dorothy and Peter in 1975	Born in: Queens, NY Grew Up in: Darien, CT High School: Fairfield Prep Undergrad: BEE, Manhattan College, 1964 Grad: SM, MIT, 1965; PhD MIT 1968 Prior faculty positions: Princeton, Purdue, George Mason Current Position: Distinguished Professor and CS Dept Chair, Naval Postgraduate School Government positions: RIACS at NASA-Ames Current residence: Salinas, CA Website: http://denninginstitute.com	

Purdue Highlights	Career Highlights
In 1972 Sam Conte offered Peter a promotion and tenure if he would come to Purdue and build an operating systems group. Peter accepted, and worked initially with Herb Schwetman, Saul Rosen, Vincent Shen, and several others, and later recruited Doug Comer and Walter Tichy. In 1974, he married Dorothy Denning. He guided 13 students to their PhDs, mostly in systems architecture and performance evaluation. Four of his students were later recognized as Purdue Distinguished Alumni for their own work. In 1979 he became CS Department Chair when Sam Conte retired. Then began a difficult period for Purdue CS because, as part national surge of student majors, the department enrollment jumped to around 700 students -- while being staffed for about 400 students. It took until 1982 to win the hearts and minds of the Purdue administration to the proposition that CS was destined to be a major science, and to build up CS with adequate space and faculty to handle the growth. That led to the renovation of the old gym into a computer science building, leaving behind the hallowed space of the Math Sciences Building's fourth floor. Unfortunately, the struggle took its toll: seven key faculty departed by the end of 1984. The department recruited excellent new faculty and continued as one of the leading CS departments in the US.	Peter got hooked by electronics at age 12. His high school science project, a computer that solved linear equations, won the Science Fair in 1959. He studied electrical engineering at Manhattan College and computer science at MIT. At MIT (1966) he discovered the principle of locality and invented the working set model to apply it in virtual memory systems. At Princeton (from 1968), he launched a life long interest in operating systems principles and co-founded the biannual ACM SOSP. There he wrote his classic book *Operating Systems Theory* (with Ed Coffman). At Purdue (from 1972), he grew an active group of students in computer systems and architecture, and served as department chair from 1979. In 1983, he and Dorothy moved to California where he was founding director of RIACS at NASA-Ames, one of the first research centers in computational science. In 1980, he co-founded CSNET, which bridged the old ARPANET to the modern Internet. In 1991, they returned to east-coast academia, he at George Mason and she at Georgetown. At Mason he founded a design project for innovators and a great principles project for computing science. In 2002 they went west again to the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, where they are now distinguished professors. During his long academic-research career, Peter published over 370 papers in computer science and 9 books. His most recent book is *The Innovator's Way* (with Bob Dunham), and he is writing *Great Principles of Computing* (with Craig Martell). Peter made a second career in ACM, serving continuously since 1967. He was president, vice president, chair of three boards, editor of *Communications*, and is now editor of *Ubiquity*. Peter has received 26 awards for his contributions in operating systems, education, and professional service.