

For release: September 3, 1987

Contact: Judy Marie Merrill
Ashton-Tate
(213) 538-7321

W. Knox Richardson
Miller Communications
(213) 822-4669

20101 Hamilton Avenue
Torrance, California 90502-1319
Telephone: 213-329-8000
Telex: 669984 ASHT TATE LSA

dBASE MAC PRODUCT BACKGROUND

dBASE Mac, Ashton-Tate's first database offering for the Macintosh personal computer, is an advanced relational database management system (DBMS) that has the power and flexibility required to accomplish a wide variety of data management tasks without the need for programming. Additionally, a full-feature procedural (programming) language provides software developers with the tools to develop sophisticated turn-key applications.

dBASE Mac combines the heritage of power and flexibility of Ashton-Tate's dBASE family with the Macintosh's easy-to-use interface and superior graphic presentation. Ashton-Tate's dBASE products have been the industry standard for the IBM-PC and compatibles, capturing a majority of the U.S. retail sales market. dBASE Mac extends the dBASE heritage to the Macintosh database market.

Ashton-Tate acquired the dBASE Mac prototype in 1985, and has since completed necessary performance improvements. Functionality has also been added based on research conducted among Macintosh users, developers, Apple technicians, and Ashton-Tate's Executive Advisory Board. The product achieves six goals:

- Extend the Macintosh's graphic user interface to facilitate quick learning and ease of use;
- Enable users to perform both day-to-day and sophisticated data management tasks without programming;
- Provide database design flexibility and extended relational capabilities;
- Create a superior reporting capability optimizing the Mac's professional-quality presentation;
- Provide compatibility with IBM-standard dBASE data files and ASCII format; and
- Provide a full-featured programming language for applications developers.

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As a second-generation Macintosh software product, dBASE Mac's implementation of the Macintosh's intuitive graphic user interface enables database novices to quickly become productive, and provides them with a growth path that leads to increasing mastery of the software's features.

Complex tasks, such as establishing relationships between data files and formatting custom reports, as well as the day-to-day functions of data entry, manipulation and retrieval can be accomplished without programming. This simple and straight-forward approach allows users to concern themselves only with data manipulation while dBASE Mac handles the details of database design.

In addition, dBASE Mac has been designed as a powerful developer's tool. Its procedural language allows the quick generation of turn-key applications and its Protect mode preserves applications from user alteration.

FLEXIBLE AND EASY TO LEARN

dBASE Mac was designed for the professional or small business owner who needs immediate access to the software's capabilities. Ashton-Tate designed pop-up menus and dialog boxes, and combined them with the Macintosh icon system. The result is a user interface that graphically leads users through every function.

Pop-up menus provide a means for selecting the program's functions. They remain hidden from view until they are activated by a click of the mouse and scroll toward the top of the screen, unveiling a list of options. Interactive dialog boxes prompt the user through tasks by providing applicable lists of choices.

At the core of the program is the Database Structure Window, where users organize information and define relationships in an easy-to-understand graphic format. View Windows, used to review and manipulate data, also provide a visual representation of data. Multiple views can be opened at any time and include:

- Form views that allow users to see single records from any related file;
- Columnar views that permit users to see information in spreadsheet-like formats; and,
- Custom views that allow users to see both form and columnar views simultaneously.

Shortcuts, such as Quick Create, provide default formats for data entry forms and columnar reports that can be used without modification or customized to emulate familiar business forms.

To further aid the learning process, dBASE Mac comes equipped with an interactive tutorial and on-disk help to explain the program's basic concepts and operations. Four how-to manuals cover the topics of Getting Started (written tutorial), Using dBASE Mac (reference guide), dBASE

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Mac Templates (with applications example disk) and Comparing Techniques with dBASE Mac (reference guide). The Ashton-Tate Publishing Group further supports the software with product-specific publications such as dBASE Mac in Business and other introductory and advanced training workbooks. A monthly newsletter, "New View," is published by Lexington Data Research. The Source and CompuServe, on-line information services, contain special user forums with tips and application ideas. TechNotes, a monthly journal available through the Ashton-Tate Software Support Center, contains up-to-date technical information including programming advice and sample programs and algorithms.

POWER WITHOUT PROGRAMMING

dBASE Mac gives users the ability to perform sophisticated data management tasks and create custom multi-file reports without the need for programming.

Advanced relational capability provides the flexibility needed for complex applications. dBASE Mac allows up to 32 data files to be related by two-way, many-to-many, or one-to-many relationships. Hierarchical structures and recursive relationships support sophisticated applications such as exploding parts inventories and genealogies.

Relationships are established by clicking and dragging the mouse from a field within one data file and releasing on the related field in another file. An arrow visually illustrates the link. The ability to share data between files saves disk space and eliminates the need for re-inputting.

A variety of field types add further flexibility in designing data structures. These include:

- **Multi-valued fields and sets**, which allow several items to be stored in a single field, such as multiple invoice numbers against one customer record.
- **Memory fields**, which allow running totals or summaries of data.
- **Formula fields**, which allow values to be derived from other fields. Thus, content may be derived by a calculation rather than keyboard entry. There is no limit to how many fields in a file can be designated as a formula field.
- **Indexed fields**, which allow reordering of data by different criteria to provide flexibility in searching and sorting.
- **Graphics field**, permit graphics to be stored and manipulated as data for inclusion in reports, forms and other documents.

Additionally, dBASE Mac supports text, numeric, date, time, logical (true/false), and multiple choice field types.

dBASE Mac handles very large files, each record having a capacity of up to 32,001 bytes. File size is determined by the available disk space.

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Custom reports may be designed to meet specific needs without programming. dBASE Mac supports the Macintosh's advanced graphic and layout capabilities to create professional-quality reports. Features include type style and size selection, graphic image storage and draw-like capabilities. Column totals and subtotals and custom line and page breaks inserts for printed reports provide further flexibility.

Printers supported are the Laserwriter and Laserwriter Plus, as well as printers from the Imagewriter line.

File compatibility with IBM-compatible dBASE data files and standard ASCII files provide a link to other software. dBASE Mac directly accesses dBASE files and supports import/export of standard ASCII files.

PROCEDURAL LANGUAGE

dBASE Mac provides applications developers with a high-level programming language characterized by a straightforward syntax similar to the English language. Procedures are created by attaching instructions to fields, files or views.

The procedural language features a variety of capabilities including pre- and post-processor functionality; add, delete and write record procedures; conditional if-then statements and a full range of mathematical, string and other functions.

Virtually all dBASE Mac interface features, such as menus, icons and dialog boxes, can be customized to provide flexible turn-key applications. Password protection at the project level enables data entry and retrieval by the user but prohibits application modification. File level password protection protects user data from unauthorized access.

dBASE Mac requires a Macintosh Plus, a Macintosh SE or a Macintosh II as well as a hard disk. dBASE Mac supports the following disk drive configuration: one 800K drive and any Macintosh-compatible hard disk. The product supports Apple's Imagewriter line, and Laserwriter and Laserwriter Plus.

PRICE AND AVAILABILITY

dBASE Mac will be sold at more than 3,500 authorized Ashton-Tate dealers. Its suggested retail price is \$495. It is now available.

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