

Background



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ASHTON-TATE PUBLISHING GROUP

In 1983, Ashton-Tate became the first microcomputer software company to create a Publishing Group. Organized initially to support the company's growing line of microcomputer software programs, the group now produces an extensive assortment of illustrated journals, books, book/disk packages and software add-ins to help computer users better understand and use a variety of hardware and software products.

Since its inception, the group has published more than 50 high-quality products on such diverse topics as dBASE III, Framework II, telecommunications, documentation, UNIX, Pascal and the general computer industry.

The Publishing Group plays an integral role in supporting Ashton-Tate's growing line of database and integrated software products. One example is the Ashton-Tate Quarterly, a journal containing software tips and applications ideas for small businesses and corporate users. The Ashton-Tate Quarterly reaches more than 15,000 subscribers.

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The Publishing Group also provides software add-ins to support Ashton-Tate products. For example, the dBASE TOOLS FOR C series for dBASE III PLUS allows users to add functions, commands and programs written in the C language to dBASE III PLUS applications. The Programmer Library and the Graphics Library are the first packages in the series.

The group's Decision Maker's Series for Framework II contains three software add-ins designed specifically to enhance the capabilities of the company's integrated software package. The programs in the series take advantage of Framework II's wide range of functions and built-in programming language to help users analyze projects, manage finances and make business decisions.

The group also publishes two software utilities -- TimeFrame and FrameLock. TimeFrame serves as a desktop assistant to Framework II by providing appointment book, calendar, calculator, letter writer and mailmerge features. FrameLock allows users of any IBM PC-compatible software to lock or encrypt files through password protection with sophisticated scrambling.

A number of the Publishing Group's books have been written primarily to aid users of Ashton-Tate products. With best-selling books such as Everyman's Database Primer for dBASE III PLUS and Framework II: An Introduction, the Publishing Group provides valuable, organized guides for first-time users of microcomputers and Ashton-Tate products.

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The Publishing Group also accommodates the most sophisticated users of Ashton-Tate products with books such as Framework II: A Programmer's Reference and Advanced Programmer's Guide Featuring dBASE II and dBASE III PLUS. Written by Ashton-Tate software developers, these reference books are viewed as essential tools for programmers seeking to develop specific applications with Ashton-Tate software. They provide comprehensive programming tutorials, extensive function directories for Framework's FRED language and the dBASE language, and useful guidelines for application design and development.

The critically-acclaimed visual guides in the group's MicroMaze series provide new microcomputer users with a colorful, graphic introduction to the inner workings of computer technology. Through the MicroMaze: A Visual Guide to Getting Organized and Through the MicroMaze: A Visual Guide from Ashton-Tate give advice on the purchase and use of equipment, describe parts of the computer, disk care, printers and organization of files. They serve as indispensable learning tools to novice computer users.

Ashton-Tate also publishes unique book/disk packages which have emerged as important guides for software programmers. For example, Exploring Pascal: A Compiler for Beginners is an ideal educational tool for translating code and learning to program in Pascal. The disk provides extensive on-line help screens, interactive tutorials and computer-graded programming exercises.

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The Publishing Group sells its publications through a variety of channels. The Ashton-Tate Quarterly is sold on a subscription basis. McGraw-Hill Publishing Company distributes the group's books and book/disk packages to the book trade. In addition, books, book/disk packages and software are sold individually or bundled with hardware and software products and marketed through computer retail stores.

The Publishing Group operates from the company's Torrance, California headquarters and reports to Larry Benincasa, vice president, new business development. Benincasa spent more than 10 years in publishing before joining Ashton-Tate in 1984. Previously, he published both books and software for Prentice-Hall, Inc. and the Reston Publishing Group. Director of Publishing Jane Mellin has been with Ashton-Tate since 1982. Mellin was most recently director of communications at New York-based Lifeboat Associates, a pioneer distributor of CP/M software products.

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