

## Background



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### FILE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

#### MARKET BACKGROUND

The microcomputer data management market is expected to total \$553 million in 1986, increasing to \$746 million by 1990, according to Future Computing, a Dallas-based market research firm.

The market is split between file managers, which generally cost less than \$400 and allow users to easily manage one data file at a time; and relational database management systems, which cost around \$700 and provide users the power to handle complicated tasks and develop specialized applications.

In 1981, U.S. businesses were using 1.2 million spreadsheet programs and 1.18 million word processors, compared to only about 100,000 data management software products. Five years later, the gap has closed considerably, and industry analysts expect more than 12 million units of data management software to be in use by 1990.

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Industry analysts estimate that file managers comprise 63 percent of data management software units in use today. File managers appeal to users who need to accomplish tasks quickly and easily but do not need a broad range of power for applications development. Common file manager applications include maintaining name and address lists, printing mailing labels, creating reports and writing form letters.

According to Future Computing, 3.5 million personal computers were shipped to the U.S. business market in 1985. In 1986, this figure is expected to reach 4.3 million, with units shipped increasing to 6.5 million by 1988, representing a compound annual growth rate of 17 percent.

A recent ITT Corp. study of buyer trends indicates that nearly three million personal computer users in 1987 will replace their present hardware with more powerful computers. They will hand down their old computers to business associates who require more sophisticated software solutions than the computer novices of three to five years ago. This trend is expected to continue as the study projects that approximately four million users will replace and hand down their PCs in 1989.

As PCs continue to proliferate, then, in small and large businesses, and computing becomes more decentralized, the number of experienced users will increase greatly as will users' computing needs. While ease of learning and use were once the

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major criteria for a successful file manager, market research indicates that today's users also require many more capabilities from a file manager and a direct growth path to more sophisticated data management applications.

This presents a sizeable market opportunity for new file managers that users will not outgrow as they become more proficient.

Ashton-Tate's RapidFile is a new file manager that provides the ease of use and increased power that today's business users require.

RapidFile is easy to use, through the support of two industry-standard interfaces -- dBASE III PLUS-like pull-down menus and a Lotus 1-2-3-like horizontal menu structure. All of RapidFile's functions are contained on a single disk, eliminating the need for disruptive disk swapping as users change tasks. Because it requires only 256K bytes of RAM, RapidFile can operate on most entry-level hardware configurations.

Up to two times faster than other file managers, RapidFile combines the speed of a RAM-based program with the capacity of a disk-based program through support of virtual memory. The product directly uses dBASE III PLUS files, providing easy access to dBASE data and a direct growth path to dBASE III PLUS for more powerful data management applications.

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RapidFile, backed by Ashton-Tate's full user support, marketing and distribution resources, extends the company's leadership position in the microcomputer data management category.

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