ASHTON·TATE

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RAPIDFILE

PRODUCT BACKGROUND

Ashton-Tate's RapidFile is a high-performance file manager that allows business users to more easily and quickly manage data, create reports and write form letters. The product has been designed to provide the most complete and versatile file management solution for users of IBM Personal Computers and compatibles.

RapidFile offers several features and benefits not provided by currently-available file management products. It is easy to learn and use, through the inclusion of two alternate industry-standard interfaces -- dBASE III PLUS-like pull-down menus and a Lotus 1-2-3-like interface and command structure. All of RapidFile's functions are contained on a single disk, eliminating the need for swapping disks as users change tasks.

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Up to twice as fast and more responsive than other file managers, RapidFile combines the speed of a random access memory (RAM)-based program with the capacity of a disk-based program through support of virtual memory, which provides additional RAM workspace by swapping data with a personal computer's hard disk.

Because it requires only 256K bytes of RAM, RapidFile can operate on most entry-level hardware memory configurations. In addition, RapidFile employs data compaction techniques to increase storage capacity on disk up to two-fold over other file managers.

Typical RapidFile applications include name and address list management, report writing, creation of mailing labels and form letters.

The product is expected to reach several types of computer users, including users who are new to file managers, Lotus 1-2-3 users who need a better means of file management, corporate users who need access to dBASE data files but do not need the power of a dBASE, and users of competing file managers who require a better solution with a compatible growth path for the future.

FILE MANAGEMENT

RapidFile allows users to display and print data in a variety of different layouts, which act as blueprints for viewing and printing data. Users can view data as a table, as forms, as a split table/form, as labels, as a quick report and as a custom report.

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Multiple layouts can be created and saved for each data file and later edited without data loss or cumbersome copying or remapping. In addition, users can change field length, type or name, redefine calculated fields and merge entire files or selected fields from separate files without losing data.

RapidFile supports five different field types: alphanumeric, numeric, report, date and calculated. Data can be automatically validated and formatted upon entry. Numeric fields can be formatted or "written" form for printing checks.

With its "Zoom" feature that uses the full screen to display one field, RapidFile allows variable length fields of up to 254 character fields or 64K-byte linked documents.

Additional data formatting features include optional currency formatting for numeric fields in either U.S. or international currency, American or European date formatting with choice of field delimiters and display styles, and the ability to perform numeric, string and date arithmetic and comparisions. The product also allows users to undo deletions.

RapidFile has powerful sort and query capabilities using various criteria, including "AND," "OR," "NOT," partial or exact match. Data also can be sorted by alphabetic, numeric or date criteria. RapidFile automatically performs queries on substring or partial values and uses wildcards during searching.

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There is no need to index data files because indices are transparent to the user and not required for optimum performance. RapidFile allows simultaneous ascending and descending sorts, up to 15 levels of concurrent sorting and sorts on calculated fields.

RapidFile provides users with an easy and flexible way to create a range of reports, from quick and simple columnar reports to those which are highly customized. Through "Quick Report," users can create a fast columnar report with automatic calculations. The "Custom Report" function allows users to create versatile, free-form reports.

Reports can be printed, displayed on-screen, or saved to disk as "Snapshots." A "Snapshot" links together the report layout, print settings, the sort and the match criteria used to select records. It provides a preset report specification users can employ each time they produce a report. Users can create up to 250 report and label formats for each file.

Multi-line page breaks and headers and footers with imbedded fields provide power not found in other products for creating sophisticated reports. "What you see is what you get" report formatting allows users to view custom layouts on-screen before printing.

RapidFile has extensive report calculation capabilities, including totaling, sub-totaling, averaging, record count, minimum value and maximum value.

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RapidFile enables users to instantly and automatically create mailing labels from data files in a variety of standard sizes. Users also can create custom labels or layouts to meet their specific needs. RapidFile prints up to ten mailing labels across, allowing for faster production of labels.

MEMO WRITER

RapidFile's memo writer provides standard word processing capabilities such as copying and moving blocks of text, search and replace, boldface, italics, underlining, super- and subscript, text justification, headers, footers and on-screen page breaks.

Unique to RapidFile is "Form Letters By Example (F.B.E.), a visual, menu-driven method of setting up mail merge form letters without programming or remembering field names.

The memo writer reads ASCII files directly to provide easy import of files from other word processors.

GENERAL

RapidFile directly uses files from Ashton-Tate's dBASE II, dBASE III and dBASE III PLUS, providing transparent access to industry-standard dBASE data and a growth path to more sophisticated database applications. It easily imports and exports Framework II, pfs: FILE, Lotus 1-2-3 and ASCII text files.

The product is compatible with 3Com 3+, PC-Nt and Novell Netware/86 networks without requiring additional software. While

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it operates on local area networks, RapidFile cannot be accessed by multiple users at the same time.

Additional features of RapidFile include access to DOS without quitting or reloading, complete context-sensitive help with on-line index and an on-line tutorial.

RapidFile supports keyboard macros for storage and recall of commonly used command sequences. It also provides shortcut speedkey commands for experienced users to bypass menus.

PROGRAM CAPACITIES

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Maximum file size:  16 Megabytes
Maximum records per file:  64,000
Maximum fields per record:  250
Maximum characters per record:  8K
Maximum characters per alphanumeric field:  64K
Maximum digits per numeric field:  254
Decimal accuracy:  9 digits
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REQUIREMENTS

RapidFile operates on the IBM PC, PC/XT, Personal Computer AT and 100 percent compatibles with 256K bytes of RAM (384K bytes when running on a network) and two 360K-byte floppy disk drives or a single 360K-byte floppy and a hard disk drive. The product supports monochrome or color monitors.

RapidFile will be available from Ashton-Tate's more than 4,900 authorized dealers nationwide in the fourth quarter of calendar 1986. Its suggested retail price is $395.

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