ASHTON·TATE

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dBASE III PLUS

PRODUCT BACKGROUND

Ashton-Tate's dBASE III PLUS is the most complete database management system on the market today for microcomputer users, from beginning users to experienced users and programmers. A powerful, easy-to-use product in a single-user configuration, its built-in multi-user capability satisfies the growth needs of businesses and organizations planning to link computers on a local area network (LAN).

The successor to dBASE III, the industry-standard relational database management system for 16-bit micros, dBASE III PLUS combines a new, natural and simpler user interface -- featuring Framework-like pull-down menus -- with improved speed, performance and power.

dBASE III PLUS offers beginning users a direct growth path to more productivity and power by providing easy access to the program's increased capabilities.

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Formerly-complex activities (such as designing custom screens, devising queries, using the relational capabilities and generating straightforward applications) and more basic functions (day-to-day data collection, and the management and retrieval of specific information) may be performed without programming.

For the developer and VAR community, dBASE III PLUS has more power and better tools for programming and application development, and maintains the dBASE programming language, the dot prompt interface, and other important features of dBASE III that have made it the development standard.

dBASE III PLUS's built-in multi-user capability allows migration from a stand-alone to a LAN environment. Networking can be accomplished by using multiple copies of dBASE III PLUS, or by purchasing dBASE III PLUS LAN Pack. Each LAN Pack contains three Access programs, which enable personal computers to share dBASE III PLUS on a network-only basis. Because dBASE III PLUS supports PC-DOS 3.1 from IBM, it will run on local area networks that are 100 percent compatible with this standard operating system, including LANs from Novell, AT&T and IBM.

dBASE III PLUS running in a multi-user LAN environment has access to all features of the single-user product, plus record and file locking to prevent data corruption, eight levels of password protection, and (unique to dBASE III PLUS) automatic encryption and decryption of data at the workstation for greater security. All data and programs from dBASE III may be used with

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the dBASE III PLUS LAN version without extensive modification.

dBASE III PLUS is the latest release in Ashton-Tate's dBASE family of products, the best-selling database management software (DBMS) products in microcomputer software history. It is the successor to dBASE III which was first shipped in June 1984. dBASE II, the first full-function relational database management program for 8-bit microcomputers, was introduced in 1981.

EASE OF USE

The Assistant, dBASE III PLUS's improved menu-driven user interface, employs Framework-like pull-down menus, making the program accessible to all levels of users. With the Assistant, one can accomplish day-to-day data management tasks without programming.

Users move through the pull-down menus with the cursor keys and select options by using the return key. The menus enable users to easily create and modify databases, and to store and retrieve information.

In addition to the menus, the Assistant has many navigation aids: the status bar, which displays the drive and file being used; key navigation and error messages, which appear on the screen to facilitate ease of operation; and a brief message line, which describes current menu options. The Assistant also helps beginning users learn dBASE III PLUS programming commands by displaying on screen every command being formed.

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dBASE III PLUS also includes both on-disk and written tutorials that teach beginning users how to use the Assistant. An extensive, context-sensitive "help" feature, accessed by striking a single function key, gives users help on whatever operation they're performing. The product's newly-written documentation is partitioned to address different levels of user sophistication.

SPEED AND PERFORMANCE

dBASE III PLUS is designed to fully utilize 16-bit microcomputer architecture. It can handle large amounts of data: an unlimited number of files; up to one billion records per file; 128 fields per record, and 4K bytes per record. It also can handle both structured fields, such as numbers and data, and unstructured fields, such as notes and memos.

Benchmark tests show that dBASE III PLUS sorts up to two times faster and indexes up to 10 times faster than dBASE III. The product's file export/import capability extends to PFS:FILE, Lotus 1-2-3, VisiCalc DIF, MultiPlan, and ASCII. It can import files from dBASE II. This capability permits users who outgrow their file management systems, and users of spreadsheet packages, to use their data with dBASE III PLUS and take advantage of its relational DBMS capabilities.

dBASE III PLUS, in stand-alone mode, has a minimum requirement of 256K bytes of random access memory (RAM).

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To run on a local area network, dBASE III PLUS requires a
minimum of 640K bytes of RAM at the server, and 384K bytes of
RAM at the workstation.

POWER WITHOUT PROGRAMMING

As users' database management needs grow, dBASE III PLUS
offers increased capabilities without the need to learn a
programming language. Four major capabilities of dBASE III PLUS
-- the Advanced Query System, Applications Generator, Screen
Painter, and View -- add substantially to the power of the
product, but do not require new users to learn programming.

dBASE III PLUS's Advanced Query System (AQS) retrieves
selected information easily. AQS uses pull-down menus to create
and store queries -- users need not memorize commands as required
by other query systems. By selecting a field and a condition, and
typing in an example, dBASE III PLUS users quickly and easily
create queries. Once the query is set, a list of the files will
reveal only those records that conform to the criteria. Queries
may be saved and retrieved for repeat use.

The View feature, fully accessible through both the
Assistant and the dot prompt, creates a virtual connection
between databases and permits access to the information in the
databases. View can combine multiple databases for data
management, report writing, and other tasks, and still maintain
separate files. Because dBASE III PLUS is a truly relational

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database, up to 10 files may be open at any one time allowing users to work with several specific files linked together rather than one large file.

The Screen Painter creates custom screens quickly when the "Format" option is selected from dBASE III PLUS's pull-down menus. The Screen Painter is a non-programming forms entry generator that builds input and output screens with multiple file access, cursor-positioned prompts and input fields, and menu options.

The Applications Generator helps the user create custom applications without programming. It generates custom menus and screens, defines database activities for those menu items, and provides messages to the user which are tailored for a specific application.

MORE POWER FOR PROGRAMMERS

Several key features for developers have been added to dBASE III PLUS. Like its predecessors from Ashton-Tate, dBASE III PLUS is a powerful tool for developers. It maintains the dBASE programming language and the dot prompt interface, key features in making the dBASE family the DBMS of choice for the development community.

The dBASE III PLUS Data Catalog easily organizes and maintains related files by showing the user only those files that

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are needed. With the Catalog, the user need not search through
an entire disk for specific files. Instead, the user selects a
catalog which contains files needed for a particular application.

All the features and benefits of the dBASE III Developer's
Release, including Runtime+, are built into dBASE III PLUS. The
product contains more than 50 enhancements to the dBASE programming
language, with eight new commands, 32 additional functions, a new
command editing capability, and support of LAN functions.

The features include:

o dBCODE, which encrypts and condenses application source
code to prevent efforts to tamper with source code.

o dBLINKER, which consolidates files, saves disk space
and creates a more efficient program.

o Improved de-bugging aids, with a History file that
contains all commands that have been entered, allowing the
correction of a long command by suspending the program, editing
the command line or retrieving the command from the History file,
and then resuming the program.

o Assembly language calls, which allow routines written in
assembly language for custom needs to be combined with dBASE III
PLUS programs for flexible custom application development.

o Environment testing, which permits developers to design
systems that completely accommodate various system environments,
and test the name of the database file, operating system
environment variables, color or monochrome screen usage, and the
names and numbers of function keys.

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o <u>Event processing</u>, which creates a more friendly program by predicting and managing error and fault situations, and includes routines to be executed when an error occurs or when the Escape key is pressed.

o <u>Keyboard buffer control</u>, which controls and accommodates flexible input by specifying the size of the type-ahead buffer.

o <u>Character/mathematical functions</u>, which permit developers to create faster and smaller programs by not having to create certain mathematical functions themselves in dBASE III PLUS.

o <u>In-line commenting</u>, which clearly conveys the flow of the dBASE III PLUS source code by placing comments on the same line as the code.

dBRUN, available separately from Ashton-Tate, delivers a cost-effective "execute-only" applications publishing solution for developers. An evaluation copy is available to dBASE III PLUS users through a coupon included in the package.

BUILT-IN MULTI-USER CAPABILITY

Just as dBASE III PLUS raises the standard for single users, it provides businesses and organizations who plan to network PCs with a growth path to multi-user capability.

dBASE III PLUS satisfies future growth needs by incorporating multi-user capability at no extra cost. A dBASE III PLUS package contains the stand-alone program; the dBASE Administrator, a local area network version of dBASE III PLUS; and the dBASE Access program, which enables one user to run the dBASE Administrator.

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Users may expand a dBASE III PLUS LAN by purchasing either additional copies of dBASE III PLUS, or the new dBASE III PLUS LAN Pack. Each LAN Pack, sold separately by Ashton-Tate authorized dealers, contains three additional dBASE Access programs, providing an inexpensive, network-only solution.

The multi-user capability of dBASE III PLUS permits several users to share a database through simultaneous access to common files. To provide true multi-user access and avoid data corruption, record locking lets users read and write to the same file, but not the same record, at the same time.

The dBASE III PLUS file locking capability allows the selective locking and unlocking of files, for the exclusive use of a file or to prevent modification of data by unauthorized parties.

The product has eight levels of password protection for a particular field, file, user, or group, to securely store sensitive data in common files.

dBASE III PLUS has a high-speed encryption algorithm that encodes and decodes protected fields at the workstation to prohibit unauthorized access through common pirating techniques and transmission line tapping. Encryption and decryption occurs with no visible degradation of system performance.

dBASE III PLUS will support both serial and parallel printers for efficient resource management.

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SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

In its stand-alone operating mode, dBASE III PLUS operates on on the IBM PC, PC AT, PC XT, or 100 percent compatible computers. It requires a minimum of 256K bytes of RAM and a dual 5 1/4-inch 360K-byte floppy disk drive, or one fixed disk drive and one 360K-byte floppy disk drive. dBASE III PLUS supports PC-DOS 2.0 and higher and any printer with 80 or more columns.

The local-area network mode requires a minimum of 640K bytes of RAM at the server and 384K bytes of RAM at the workstation. The dBASE III PLUS LAN Pack requires dBASE III PLUS to operate on the IBM PC Network under PC-DOS 3.1/PC Network Program. Other local area networks that use a 100 percent PC-DOS 3.1 compatible operating system, including Novell's Advanced NetWare Version 1.01 and higher, may also support dBASE III PLUS and dBASE III PLUS LAN Pack.

PRICE AND AVAILABILITY

The suggested retail price of dBASE III PLUS is $695, including the single-user DBMS, the dBASE Administrator, and one dBASE Access program. The dBASE III PLUS LAN Pack, sold separately, is priced at $995 for three dBASE Access programs and three full sets of documentation.

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