As the Wrench Turns

CPMS User's Journal

New *&#!% versions of software

CPMS, RBase Windows...

How many new versions of a program is enough and how many are too many? Many of us are perfectly content with Windows XP but now all new PC's come with Vista and now Windows 7. Many products have "forced migration" built in and only support older programs for a few years or versions. Just doesn't seem fair.

I support technology that replaces moving parts. Digital cameras/camcorders instead of VHS and tape cassettes. But software never had any moving parts. It's all smoke and mirrors.

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Our data base manager, RBase, has gone through a number of new versions over the last few years and we have had an opportunity to work with their current version- 7.6. Many of the changes are directed at making the developer's job easier while making the end product tighter, faster, and more stable.

There is a lot of software on the market that in the rush to get the program in your hands, they took a lot of shortcuts. I give the folks at RBase Technologies credit for taking the time to review, fix, and even redesign when and where necessary.

With the economy still a bit sluggish, it is a great time to "retool your shop". When it comes to software, first try and determine the cost/benefit of what you have. And with regard to new versions, I recommend that it should be "twice as good". There's nothing wrong in looking at efficiencies. "We can get twice as much done in half the time." Keep in mind that with any new program there is a learning curve which translates into lost time.

As a case in point, some of the old accounting programs are very labor intensive. For personal or small business, take a look at Quickbooks. They even have options to automatically reconcile with your bank account.

Speaking of hard to change old habits, are you still paying your bills with a checkbook, envelopes, and stamps? There's another example of how computers and the Internet can actually make our lives easier

And lastly, are the computer programs you use really intuitive? Do they work like you think they should and require a minimal amount of learning? For example, I found that the newest version of Powerpoint, which can be used for virtually any type of presentation, is extremely easy to use.

Take a minute and download our new Powerpoint version of the CPMS Demo. It's a very short presentation and you can check if your Maintenance Department is taking advantage of some of the great new features now available.
 www.TheBestCMMS.com

Tips and Techniques

In the same way that many of you come across clever ways of fixing or working around problems in your plant, I am always amazed at how many things you can do in CPMS and our data base program. The CPMS Power Search screen really does allow you to view or print anything you want in your data base. Likewise, you might want to make a "global change" to your CPMS files and don't want to modify one row at a time.

One of our customers asked if there was an easy way to add two new lines to every PM Duty in the Master Schedule. As in most cases, there are a number of ways of performing a task and it's a matter of determining which is the best way.

In the case of given the mechanic a couple of lines of something you want them to do on every PM check, you can:
● Make it the header message which is on the top of every page.
● Use the new page footer message which has up to four lines for the mechanic to read and sign off.
● Or actually add two lines to every set of PM instructions in the Master Schedule.

If you decide to go with the third option, you can click on the plus sign on the PM Duty, enter line number "0", type the new instructions in once, and then paste it into each entry in the Master Schedule. Don't forget to click on the "Renumber PM duties" button.

In order to automate this process, you can use the Import/Export option in Supervisor, Other Utilities. Choose Mechanics Handbook, **(E)xport** Data, and your selection criteria is where Duty Line Number = "1" or Duty Line Number = "2". This will create a text file in your CPMS files folder name BOOK.TXT with the first two lines of every entry in the Master Schedule.

You can use the Windows text editor, Notepad, to make the desired changes. Using Edit, Replace, you can enter the search and replacement text. In this example it would be:
",1,"
",0,"YOUR NEW FIRST LINE"

and then
",2,"
",0,"YOUR NEW SECOND LINE"

When you use Import/Export again to Import these two new lines back into CPMS, you will need to click the "Renumber PM duties" button. There are a couple of other considerations you should take into account. For example, if some of your Master Schedule entries only have one PM Duty. And, as always, you should Backup your CPMS Files first.

If you want to make a "global change" to your CPMS files, please contact us first so we can help provide some additional guidance.

And the Winner is...

Scdott Madden from Heiners Bakery, Huntington, WV, and Matt Ickler from Stroehmann Bakery, Hazleton, PA, both had the right answer to the last newsletter Quiz and each received $50. The question was: if the minimum date in a column was 11/25/00 and the maximum was 03/28/08 then how could the average be 06/05/58? The answer is that the year in 11/25/00 did not mean 2000, but instead 1900 or even 0000.

Although CPMS will save a two-digit year of "00" as "2000", it is possible to have "bad dates" stored in your data base. There are numerous safeguards to help prevent this from occurring and in most cases this is a carryover from old versions of the data base program or even file damage. To locate these types of errors, you can use the Check Quality of Your Data utility.

CPMS Quiz

For $100. You are Editing the Master Schedule and changed the PM frequency from B (Weekly) to D (Monthly) and you get an error message of "Description Ident already in use". Checking the Master Schedule you find that there is no entry for this equipment for D (Monthly). How can you easily locate and resolve this error?

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