

ADDENDUM TO PRACTIFILE

Integrating With Other Programs

Database and spreadsheet programs are each equipped with a variety of features, yet there are situations where it would be helpful to put database files into a spreadsheet for further analysis. Or to convert a spreadsheet of information into a database to print it in a special report format.

Thus, PractiCorp has made PractiFile and PractiCalc 64 file-compatible, allowing you to change the structure of your information so that it can be accessed easily by both programs. The following steps tell how to convert spreadsheets to database files and vice versa. Work through the steps carefully; you'll soon find yourself swapping files with ease.

It is strongly suggested that you use the same data disk for storage of spreadsheet and database files when converting from one program to another. To avoid confusion, name your files according to the program which will access them. Files to be used with PractiFile may end with /DB, while those for use with PractiCalc would end with /SS. Accurate naming of files will eliminate confusion when loading data.

As in the manual, prompts regarding when to insert disks will not be given in the addendum. Follow the on-screen instructions, removing disks only when the red light is off, the drive motor has stopped, and the screen instructs you to do so.

PractiFile to PractiCalc 64: Database Files into Spreadsheets

The conversion of data files between PractiFile and PractiCalc is best understood if you know how the data is to be displayed in its new format. Each record of PractiFile will become a row in PractiCalc. Each field of a record will take one column of one row. Thus, the first record of PractiFile will appear across the first row of a PractiCalc spreadsheet when the files are converted.

With PractiFile loaded in the Commodore 64:

1. Type O to open an old file. The "old" file is the data file which is to be converted into a spreadsheet.
2. Type the name of the data file and press RETURN.
3. When the File Menu appears, type C for creating a sequential file.

4. Type the new name which the database will have as a spreadsheet. (For example, if your database file was called TEST/DB, you might name the spreadsheet equivalent TEST/SS.) Press RETURN.
5. The program then asks: DO YOU WANT A PRACTICALC TYPE FILE? Type Y and press RETURN.
6. The fields of the original database program are listed and the prompt: HOW MANY FIELDS WILL THE SEQUENTIAL FILE HAVE?

Here the fields of the database file become the columns of the spreadsheet. You can select whether all or only some of the database fields are included in the spreadsheet. You can create blank columns within the spreadsheet file. And you can select the order which the database fields (and blank columns) take in the spreadsheet.

If you had eight fields in the database file, wanted to use only seven and need three extra blank columns for future data, you would enter 10 and press RETURN.

Type the number of fields (columns) you need in the new spreadsheet and press RETURN.

7. Next, select the order which the random fields of PractiFile will take in the sequential fields (columns) of PractiCalc 64. This arranges the database information as you want it to appear.

The question SEQ FIELD NO. X SHOULD BE LOADED WITH RAN FIELD NO: appears on the screen. Answer it with the number of the corresponding field in your PractiFile file. If you want a blank column to appear, type 0 (zero).

The above prompt and the question NUMERIC FIELD? appear for each field of the database. If the field of the PractiFile file contains numbers, type Y and press RETURN. For non-numeric fields, press RETURN.

8. When the last field has been loaded into a sequential field, the questions START AT RECORD NO: and END AT RECORD NO: appear. The default answers, for which you need only press RETURN, are the first and last records of the random file. To convert the entire database file into a spreadsheet, press RETURN twice. Otherwise, enter the numbers of the first and last record to converted. All records in between then become the rows of the spreadsheet.
9. The screen then reads: OUTPUT TO CASSETTE. To answer yes, type Y and press RETURN. To answer no, simply press RETURN.

10. The screen next reads: CORRECTIONS (Y/N)? If you need to make changes, type Y and press RETURN. Follow the on-screen prompts to change any of your previous answers. When all information is correct, place your data disk in the drive, type N in response to the CORRECTIONS question, and press RETURN.
11. With the File Menu on the screen, type ↑ to return to the Main Menu.
12. With the Main Menu on the screen, type R. Insert your PractiCalc 64 program disk and press RETURN.
13. Wait for PractiCalc to load. Then select the number of rows and columns in the spreadsheet. Insert the data disk and load the newly created sequential or spreadsheet file as you would any PractiCalc file. (Press F3, type L, type @0:filename and press RETURN.)

In a few seconds, the information which was previously in the database format of PractiFile is displayed within the PractiCalc spreadsheet. You can handle this information as you would any PractiCalc spreadsheet; insert and delete rows and column, sort alphabetically and numerically, include the values in formulas, etc.

PractiCalc 64 to PractiFile: Spreadsheets into Database Files

Just as in creating spreadsheets from database files, it is suggested that both the spreadsheet file and the database file into which you're converting the spreadsheet, be stored on the same data disk.

Before changing from a spreadsheet into a database file, count the number of rows and columns in the spreadsheet which contain information. (If there are blank rows or columns between rows or columns of data, include the blanks in your total.) Each row of the spreadsheet will become a record of PractiFile, while each column will become a field within each record.

With the PractiFile Main Menu on the screen:

1. Type S to start a file. What you will be doing is creating the format of a database file into which you'll load the existing spreadsheet's data.

2. Answer the questions for starting a new file as you would for creating any PractiFile file.

When asked the maximum number of records, enter the number of rows you just counted in your spreadsheet.

When asked for the maximum size of each record, multiply the number of columns of your spreadsheet by 11 (nine for each character in the columns, and two extra for each column which will become a field.) If your spreadsheet columns are more than nine characters in width, add extra characters to 11.

IMPORTANT: When approximating, be generous; otherwise the spreadsheet won't fit into the database file.

When asked how many fields per record, enter the number of columns in the spreadsheet. If you want additional fields in the database file to be blank for later use, enter a number larger than the number of columns in the spreadsheet.

Then title each field; often field titles can be the same as column titles from the spreadsheet.

Select the keys of the file as you would when creating any PractiFile file.

3. Save this format to your data disk. Do NOT format the disk; it should already contain the PractiCalc file which is to be converted.
4. With a format or structure written for a new database file, you can enter the data. Instead of entering the records one at a time, you'll load a sequential file, i.e., the PractiCalc file. When the Main Menu returns to the screen, type O to open an old file.
5. Enter the name of the data file you just created.
6. When the File Menu appears, type L to load from a sequential file.
7. Enter the name of the spreadsheet file. Press RETURN.
8. In response to the question IS THE FILE IN PRACTICALC FORMAT?, type Y and press RETURN.

Type N to the question IS THE FILE ON CASSETTE?
9. Load the fields of the database file with the fields (columns) of the spreadsheet file. Then each record will be added.

If you established a database file which is too small to handle the spreadsheet file, a message will appear on the screen. You can always exit the program and start again with a new, larger file.

If one row of your spreadsheet is too large, (i.e., has too many characters), the message RECORD TOO LARGE - SKIP IT appears. Type Y and the process of converting the spreadsheet into a database continues.

10. When the File Menu appears, type D for direct file maintenance. Type N to start reviewing the records of the newly-created database file.

If you had blank rows or rows of dashes and titles in your spreadsheet, they will have become records. Delete any records which contain unnecessary information. You now have what was once a spreadsheet in the convenient format of a database file. Use the file as you would any file which was originally written with PractiFile.

Word Processing and PractiFile

PractiFile's files can be structured as sequential files. Their compatibility with a word processing program is dependent upon the word processing program's ability to merge a sequential file with text. Refer to the manual of your word processing software to determine whether it can use PractiFile's files.

CREATING BACKUP COPIES OF DATA FILES USING A SINGLE DRIVE

The PractiFile program creates backup copies of your data disks. With a program of this complexity, it is worth the time and effort to create and maintain a good backup system. It is recommended that you backup your data disk at regular intervals; the suggested system is to have at least three copies of each important disk. There are several situations which can cause a loss of information already stored by the program. When this happens, it is more convenient to use a backup disk to recover from the problem, rather than start from the beginning. To make a copy of the data disk using the Commodore 1541 disk drive, use the following procedure.

With the PractiFile Main menu on the screen:

1. Type B.

2. The screen clears and displays the command to load the 1541 Backup program. After the program is loaded, a display title "Single Disk Backup V1.0" appears. There are six screen sections listed. All operator instructions appear in the last section on the screen.
3. The first instruction reads: ENTER THE PROGRAM OPERATION CODE. The program offers two methods for backing up a disk. The first is the BAM BACKUP method which copies the disk starting at the first available track regardless of how the original disk is set up. The second method is the DIRECT BACKUP; this copies the exact disk layout of the original. According to Commodore, the BAM method is preferred. Type either B for BAM BACKUP or D for DIRECT BACKUP. Then press RETURN.
4. The next instruction reads: ENTER DISK NAME. Type the name of the destination (backup) disk and press RETURN. (If you do not enter a name, the disk is named by default.) Next, respond to the disk ID prompt by typing a two-character or digit ID code. Press RETURN. The name and ID code appear in the disk section. The DISK section shows the disk registered in the drive. At that prompt, insert the destination disk in the drive and press RETURN.
5. The EXECUTING section reads: FORMATTING DESTINATION DISK. When the formatting procedure is completed, the DISK STATUS section should read: 00, OK, 00, 00
6. Insert the source (original) disk in the drive and press RETURN. The EXECUTING section reads: READING BAM FROM SOURCE DISK. Respond to the verification prompt and verify source disk for backup; press RETURN. The program then reads the disk data into the buffer. As the buffer fills, you can watch the buffer gauge slowly move from left to right.
7. When the buffer is full, the drive stops whirring and the INSERT DESTINATION DISK prompt is displayed. Insert the destination disk and press RETURN. The buffer gauge moves from right to left as it empties the stored data from the buffer to the destination disk. When it finishes, you are prompted to insert the source disk.
8. Repeat steps 6 and 7 until the OPERATOR INTERVENTION section reads: DONE. PUT PROGRAM DISK INTO DRIVE. Press F1 to exit the backup program.

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