

LIBRARY MASTER VERSION 2.0:

STEADY IMPROVEMENT FOR "ONE OF THE BEST"

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The promise of enhanced functionality has been met with the latest version of Library Master, and it bodes well for the evolution of Library Master into a particularly powerful bibliographic and text management system. The previous version (1.2) of Library Master was well received by numerous reviewers [1-6]. Library Master was described as "a user-friendly database program for PCs designed specifically for bibliographic citations" [2]. Library Master is "a well-designed package," "more flexible than many other packages in this class," but "fairly new and still [having] a few things to be fixed...Once the few bugs are fixed this is a package that could serve the scholar very well. It...meets the needs of scholars/researchers in any field" [1]. "It is time for some of the other program developers to look at Library Master to see how so much can be done so well" [4].

While these reviews suggest a very powerful program, users of bibliographic software, or of any software for that matter, continue to ask for more and more. Library Master version 2.0 does offer some significant new features, such as well-implemented local area network (LAN) access, and enhancements leading to improved operational stability and easier use. However, numerous wish list improvements still remain to be addressed in future versions.

GENERAL FEATURES

Library Master version 2.0 is "a user-friendly database program" [2] that has retained its user interface and general

mode of operation with the recent update. Library Master is a DOS program with clear, easy-to-use menus for all operations. The main menu has remained unchanged except that a helpful database description window has been added. At a glance, one can learn the user-defined database description, size, and creation and recent modification dates of the open database. Features and functionality have been added to the secondary menus. Program setup and data import remain separate functions. However, most commonly used set-up functions have been moved into the main program, such as screen colors, various editor parameters, and file paths, leaving only some global printer, word processor and network path parameters in the separate set-up program. Library Master functions well as a DOS application under the

Windows environment, thereby allowing "multitasking," either with other applications or with the Library Master import program. Version 2.0 has been extensively tested by users, and errors, which had interfered with effective operation under Windows, as well as those referred to in an earlier review [1], have been virtually eliminated. A Windows icon and PIF file are supplied.

Assistance on Library Master is available from several sources. Context-sensitive online help has been enhanced. The printed documentation has been substantially rewritten and is now two volumes, a tutorial *Getting Started* guide

and a comprehensive *Reference Manual*, plus a brief *Network Installation Guide* for network versions. The *Getting Started* guide should be effective for meeting its goal to speed up the process of becoming productive. It makes extensive use of sample databases and related files supplied with Library Master. Documentation on importing and report customization have been well expanded. The index, a frequent source of complaint with the earlier version, is now a good entry point to the documentation, and covers both volumes. The Reference manual also

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includes helpful appendices describing Library Master files and error messages. Balboa Software provides excellent technical support, available by telephone or Internet/BITNET e-mail. Information is also exchanged on the Libmastr Discussion List (see Product Information box).

MULTIPLE USER NETWORK ACCESS

A most significant enhancement is the development of the Novell NetWare and NetBIOS-compatible local area network (LAN) version. Multiple users can now simultaneously

browse, search, and edit a database. Library Master insures database integrity by controlling write access to individual records and by limiting global functions, such as database repair or restructuring, while others are using the database. Changes to records are available to all users immediately when an edited record is saved. Access to network databases can be controlled within Library Master by password, and rights to individual databases can be designated as either read only, read/write, or supervisor. These rights are a further restriction on the LAN subdirectory rights given to the LAN user. One concern is that users who have been given read-only access to a database within Library Master still must be given read/write access in the DOS environment in order to allow Library Master Network Control Files to be updated appropriately.

Installation of the network version of Library Master is a complicated process because of the many installation options available to the administrator. Great flexibility is available to satisfy installations varying from public read-only databases for which DOS access can be limited, to shared databases for workgroups whose members may all want full read/write access. Provision is also made for personal databases in private subdirectories. The network version is well designed so that no user with network access need load a personal version of the software. The *Network Installation Guide* does not fully explain all the options, but assistance from Balboa Software is readily available.

RECORD STRUCTURE AND EDITING

All functions involving creation, editing and viewing of database records use the readily modified Data Input Form. Database records are displayed on the monitor in one or more screens of the Data Input Form, which allows determination at a glance of the structure and contents of each record. The name of each information field is provided above or beside the input area. A strength of Library Master is the variety of field characteristics available. Fields may be of variable and nearly unlimited size. They may be defined as:

- names, whose handling in report generation has been substantially enhanced;
- text or text with paragraphs, common in most nonbibliographic text database programs as "memo" fields;
- literature references to specific works being analyzed;
- large or small integers;
- or dates of various formats.

Fields can be further characterized as:

- unique or required values;
- containing subfields;
- indexed for improved searching;
- compressed for efficient storage of repetitive values;
- or lists, of value for many different fields containing multiple entries, such as authors, author affiliations, literature references, or equivalent or related references or patents.

Editing is now available for records located by browse or search by pressing a single function key <F8> rather than by returning to the main menu. This greatly facilitates the correction of typos or the addition of comments, for example. Movement around the Data Input Form is now easier by implementation of the <tab> key for movement to the next <tab> or previous <shift><tab> fields. Keystroke macros are very powerful for performing repetitive editing tasks, which may include search and replace functions. Global search and replace functionality would be even better when editorial judgment or manual input are not needed. Special word processor commands such as bold-faced, italics, underline, super- and subscript, and "keep word capitalization as is" (even when the report output format requires capitalization, as in the word "dBase") are readily invoked, and command codes are indicated by color coding and by characters on the status line at the top of the screen.

RETRIEVING AND VIEWING RECORDS

Records may be found either by searching for specific text contents or by browsing full records or indexed fields. Each of these functions has been significantly enhanced. Boolean search expressions may now use spelled out

Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT) instead of confusing symbols (a frequent wish list request). Library Master also has some relational operators, such as less than or greater than, and has sound-alike searching—of possible use for names or words with spelling variants (aluminum or aluminium). Search expressions may be up to 512 characters long. It would be desirable to be able to combine multiple terms from one field without having to repeat the field descriptor for each term. Similarly, a short-cut could be created to allow a single term to be searched in more than one field (but not globally) without having to repeat the term after each field descriptor. Records identified by a search may be saved as a "list," and now previously stored lists can be further searched (subset searching). Search strategies can now be saved as well. This has proved particularly valuable for sharing strategies with networked colleagues who have less skill developing appropriate search strategies.

Searching is practically instantaneous for selections based on record number or type (new functionality) or for indexed fields. Databases commonly have indexed author, affiliation, title, and subject (index terms or keyword) fields. A full list of indexed terms can be invoked during search strategy formation or during browsing (see the following). A simplified "point and select" search function has been created for which selection of an indexed term adds the appropriate terminology to the search statement. Truncation operators may then be applied to the search statement to expand the search as necessary. Navigation through the index list may be carried out by typing the first character of the desired entry and then paging down appropriately. One wish list item is to allow typing subsequent characters until the desired item is homed in upon. Another would be to indicate the number of records for which the index term applies.

Browse mode can be invoked directly or is called automatically once a record is found during a search. This latter feature allows records to be viewed, evaluated and even edited while the search is continuing. The browse screen has function keys for editing the record, previewing the

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bibliographic information as it would be printed according to the default Style sheet, printing the individual record or dumping it to a disk file. A customized print style can be created for the individual record print or dump-to-file function. When browse mode is invoked from the main menu, many of the same features described above for the search mode are available. Records can be selected by record number, by previously saved search "lists," or by selecting from listings of the index term field contents.

A major enhancement to browse mode is the creation of a powerful Brief view, which displays up to seven fields in tabular format for browsing the database or viewing search results. The Brief view is easily customized as appropriate to the database. Toggling between Brief and Full browse views is performed by pressing a single function key <F6>.

IMPORTING

The import function, a powerful feature of Library Master, has been enhanced with new import parameters files and refined menus for import files customization. Over two dozen different

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information sources are supported by standard import parameters files supplied with Library Master, including the following ones new to version 2.0:

- four online library catalogs (Universities of California (MELVYL) and Toronto, NOTIS, and GEAC);
- CD-ROM databases (Compact Cambridge MEDLINE, EPIC, ABI/INFORM, AGRICOLA, and Religious and Theological Abstracts);
- online sources (Chemical Abstracts on STN, EPIC from OCLC);
- files from other database programs (Notebook II).

MARC tagged format is supported for some sources directly or by using an optional "add-on" program, Data

Magician. The developers of Data Magician and Library Master have built-in compatibility between the programs so that source files can be readily and substantially transformed by Data Magician for easy importation into Library Master.

Custom import parameters files can be readily created for importing from almost any source. This process has been facilitated by reorganization of the import file editing menus. The import parameters files have been separated into four different functions: choice of the destination database; mapping of source-to-database record types; mapping of source-to-database information fields; and definition of source file parameters, such as field characteristics and delimiters, or record markers. Assistance is offered by Balboa Software on creating custom import parameters files, locating similar ones prepared by other users, or using Data Magician. Price quotes are also available from Balboa Software for creating custom import files.

REPORT GENERATION

Preparation of bibliographies and references lists is a principal reason why Library Master is popular. Reports are generated within Library Master using: Style Sheets to determine the arrangement of fields and appropriate punctuation within a printed record; Format Files to determine the overall arrangement of records on a page, including page parameters such as margins, character pitch, line spacing, and page annotation; and Sort Order Files to order the records in a report.

The latest version has enhanced Style Sheets to handle better first names and initials, capitalization and letter case conversion, date formats, and complex style definitions. Library Master comes with over twenty Style Sheets, nearly half of which are newly supplied or updated (Turabian and Vancouver) with version 2.0.

Format Files are supplied for creation of many standard reports, and there are now substantially more formatting options available for creating custom reports. One can now readily create bibliographies in which records are grouped according to indexed field

entries, such as authors, subjects, or journal names. Authority lists corresponding to individual field indexes, and catalogs of books or periodicals are easily output. I find Library Master particularly valuable for formatting selected records in word-processor format for direct incorporation into search reports [6]. This is similar to the more common usage of reference list creation, again in word-processor format, in styles appropriate for publication in scholarly journals. While Library Master can accommodate most major footnote and reference styles, it cannot yet interact with word processors for in-text formatting of footnotes and citations. This is anticipated in the next major release of Library Master.

FUTURE ENHANCEMENTS

Previous reviews have highlighted features not yet available in Library Master. Balboa Software has been very appreciative of its customers' feedback, but has set clear priorities and a

WISH LIST

1. Clearly designated correspondence between record lists, style sheets and import files and the databases to which they correspond.
2. Ability to change path on directory listing screens.
3. Global search and replace.
4. User-definable duplicate detection and removal.
5. Quantitative indexes and speed search through indexes by typing successive characters in the target index entry.
6. Mark individual records in browse mode for inclusion into record lists.
7. Incorporation of the importing function into the main menu and not as a separate program.
8. Preparation of bibliographies for word processor documents by in-text formatting of footnotes and citations.
9. A Microsoft Windows version.
10. Incorporation of images or hypertext linking to images.

conservative course on implementation of new features. As a result, many of the previously requested enhancements are still upcoming, according to Balboa Software. For example, of the seven wish list items of Raeder, four have yet to be implemented. I have combined some of these with others from Library Master Discussion List members and with my top "wish list" items in the accompanying box.

Some of the wish list items have not already been discussed. The first two are improved navigation features. Currently, when one calls up menus with files, lists, or record types, most of them listed are not actually applicable to the currently opened database. Either the menu should list only applicable entries or should be annotated appropriately. The request for ability to change path on directory listing screens is said to be high on Balboa Software's new features list. So too, are wishes three through seven. I particularly encourage implementation of global search and replace, user-definable duplicate detection and removal, and quantitative indexes and speed search through indexes, each of which I would use during almost every Library Master session. In-text footnote and citation formatting is a critical function used by many typical users of this type of program.

Implementation of Library Master in other operating environments, such as Windows or Macintosh, is an important matter for future market growth. However, such expansion to other platforms requires nearly complete rewriting of the program. Of concern is that such new implementations of established programs frequently result in fewer features and even reduced functionality. For example, neither WordPerfect nor Lotus 1-2-3 have had particularly successful migrations to Windows. Therefore, the wish list entry for a Windows version is made with some hesitation. While I believe that the current level of functionality will not be adequate to compete in the future, Library Master is currently one of the best programs of its type because of its ease-of-use and intelligent design and implementation. As a supportive user, I could only wish for the additional features as indicated in the wish list coupled with further improved operability and compatibility

with other programs made possible by Windows implementation (true Clipboard usage, Dynamic Data Exchange (DDE), Object Linking and Embedding (OLE)). In addition, programming under Windows ought to eliminate the need to expand support to other printers or other display modes because Windows handles these functions. Windows would also ease incorporation of images, which are just beginning to be a substantial part of online databases, such as TrademarkScan (DIALOG), Chemical Abstracts (STN), or Derwent World Patent Index (images coming on one or more systems in 1994).

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Product In Brief

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