



DY-Computes

Dynamite Newsletter

Spring, 2003

New Dynamite Features

Version 10.27 of Dynamite Generation 3 is now available for downloading. New features include:

- New “no fault” reporting features (see story)
- Additional reference table lists for report selection
- Addition of time card entry via Excel
- Addition of integration with ACCPAC Pro 7.1
- Addition of integration with Softline VAM 6.0
- Addition of full screen viewing of complaints
- Enhancement of selection lists to improve speed
- Minor program corrections and adjustments

Version 8.8.6 of Dynamite 2000 is now also available for downloading. This product is still supported and used by hundreds of organizations.

New Web Site

If you haven't visited us on the Internet lately, check out our new web site at a brand new address:

www.DynamiteService.com.

We have improved the appearance and made it easier to navigate the site. You can still download software updates and we have added a list of changes for each version.

Attention Chocoholics... Don't despair. The Chocolate Truffle Brownie recipe is still there. You can find it on the Fun Page.

Factoid

Donkeys kill more people annually than plane crashes. Recommendation: fly instead of riding, especially if traveling overseas.

Factoid

Oak trees do not produce acorns until they are fifty years of age or older. Software publishers also get better with age.

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admin@southbysouthwest.com



E-Mail Spam

Last fall, we reported our findings about e-mail spam and the overflowing wastebasket of computer bytes that we were experiencing. In June, we received some 1,660 e-mail messages per week and recently the total number had risen to almost 2,000 per week.

In January, we downloaded a **free** product called MailWasher from www.MailWasher.net. The product operates as a “cleansing agent” and sits between your Internet post office and your mail program. Basically, the program queries your e-mail provider(s) every few minutes and presents a list of messages to you. The actual e-mail messages are not downloaded to your machine which greatly improves the communication time and keeps virus attachments off your computer.

The sending addresses are compared to several Internet blacklist services plus your own blacklist that you build. Unwanted messages are not only deleted but a “bounce” message is returned to each sending address indicating that yours is a bad address. The assumption is that these spammers will take your address off their mail list.

E-mails from friends and associates are not flagged by MailWasher and would flow to your mail program the next time you retrieve mail.

Last fall, we reported we might need to take out a web loan to buy a faster computer so we can get a psychic to advise us at an on-line casino but no more. We'll have to find another excuse to buy that faster computer.

Pop Up Internet Windows

It seems that every site you visit on the Internet has them: special offers for cell phones, amazing XCam pricing, cheap airline tickets, and the never ending Double Click ads. Not only are they annoying but they significantly degrade your productivity.

In January, we installed a copy of NoAds, a free utility from www.SouthBayPC.com and can now surf the net more smoothly with less distraction.

NoAds resides in memory on your computer and is always active. Whenever an unwanted window pops up, all you do is maximize NoAds and add the offending window to your targeted list. All future pop ups with that identical window title are suppressed by NoAds before they are displayed. There may be a brief indication that the unwanted window has been received but the window quickly evaporates. Not bad for a free utility.

Caution: By accident, we found an undocumented but potentially useful feature. If you mistakenly add a running program to your target list, NoAds will trap that program and prevent you from running it in the future. This feature can also trap subdirectories on your hard disk when viewed with Windows Explorer. If either of these situations happen by mistake, you can remove the program or directory name from the NoAds Target List.

How do I?

What's the best way to set up minimum service charges while still accounting for actual labor hours?



A minimum service charge for one hour is common in the service industry. But if the technician only spent 30 minutes, the labor cost and technician productivity was not an hour.

The Flat Rate feature of Dynamite can help here. After reading the related story in this newsletter, you can see that the “parent” charge becomes your minimum charge and the “child” becomes the labor charge. The quantity of the child can be adjusted to reflect the actual time spent.

Revenue, labor costs, and technician productivity are all accurate without painful data entry.

How cold is it?

Winter is almost over but the memories of snow and ice are still fresh in our minds. (“Our” is used in the collective sense because we don’t have snow or ice here in San Diego. When the rare 30 degree days do occur, we generally just go back to bed.)



At 60 degrees above zero:

Floridians turn on the heat
New Englanders plant gardens

At 50 above zero:

Californians shiver uncontrollably
New Englanders sunbathe

At 40 above:

Italian & English cars won’t start
New Englanders drive with the top down

At 32 above:

Distilled water freezes
Swimming season ends in Boston

At 20 above:

Floridians put on coats and thermal underwear
New Englanders put on long sleeve shirts

At 10 above:

North Carolina landlords finally light the furnace
New Englanders have their last BBQ

At zero degrees:

People in Miami all die
People in New Hampshire close the windows

At 10 degrees below zero:

Californians fly away to Acapulco
New Englanders get out their winter coats

At 25 below:

Hollywood disintegrates
Vermont Girl Scouts sell cookies door to door

At 40 below:

Washington, DC runs out of hot air
New Englanders let their dogs sleep indoors

At 100 below:

Santa Claus abandons the North Pole
New England mini-vans won’t start

At 460 below:

All atomic motion stops (absolute zero)
Public schools in Maine subject to closure

At 600 below:

Hell freezes over
New Englanders remark: “Cold ‘nuff fer ya?”

Factoid

#1 The first owner of the Marlboro Company died of lung cancer. So did the first Marlboro Man.

#2 You burn more calories sleeping than you do watching television. You also smoke less when sleeping!

Focus on Generation 3

“No fault” Report Modifications

Introduced with Generation 3, was the capability for programmers and technically-oriented users to modify their own report layouts. The Report Modification function on the Utility Menu enables you to **modify the layout** of any standard report. For example, you can add your company logo, change, add related data fields, and even change the layout of the service order form.

This functionality was designed to be insulated from future software updates. That is, your custom report is untouched by any subsequent Dynamite version.

The concept of “no fault” means that even if you mess up a report to the point that it no longer works properly, you can always go back to the original version.

Because Dynamite includes its own report writer, there is a single presentation screen for making **data selection** and **sorting** choices. The screen is completely data driven which means that if you want to add another selection option or wish to add a sort sequence, you merely add a record to the Dynamite reporting database. No programming is required although one needs to possess basic FoxPro skills. Again, if your new record causes a reporting problem, all you have to do is delete it.

Introduced with version 10.26 of Dynamite, you now have the ability to modify the actual program that assembles the data for the report. This “**processing logic**” is a small program that prepares all of the databases required for the report by applying the options made in the report selection grid and other specific rules.

Your programmer can copy the standard Dynamite report processing program, make the desired changes, and then save it as a custom program. These changes are also insulated from future Dynamite updates and specific instructions are included in the User Guide.

Finally, provision has been made for the creation of up to **10 new reports** that can be designed and programmed under your direction. These custom reports will appear on the Dynamite menu and appear similar to the operator. Future updates will not affect these reports. The tools described above, along with special naming conventions, are used to construct these reports in much less time than a typical programming project would normally require and would locate those reports where users can find them.

Flat Rate Pricing

For many years now, Dynamite has included the capability of Flat Rate Pricing, otherwise known as “Kitting” or “Bill of Material.” For example, when you take your car into Oil Changes R Us, you are presented with simple choices such as:

- Oil change, 4-6 cylinders cars and trucks - \$29.95
- Oil change, 8 cylinder cars - \$34.95
- Oil change with brake check - \$39.95

This list was obviously prepared by the Marketing Department. If the choices were prepared by the Accounting Department, the 4 cylinder oil change might become:

- 4 quarts, oil, 20W30 SAE - \$4.16
- 1 AC Oil Filter, # 54882 - \$8.43
- 8 squirts of grease - \$1.60
- 1 shop wrag, cleaning - \$.20
- 20 mins. Labor, entry level - \$4.00
- 1 Overhead allocation - \$5.06
- 1 Gross profit - \$6.50
- Total - \$29.95



The point here is not to ridicule our accounting friends (because we are one too) but to illustrate how your invoicing/inventory system “thinks.” There is no physical item on the shelf called a “4 cyl oil change” but there are quarts of oil, oil filters, and labor availability. To bridge the gap between marketing and accounting, Dynamite has developed the Kitting function. When entering in a charge for the oil change, all you would need to do is add one line, 4CYLOILCHG. Dynamite would recognize this part as a kit (parent) and proceed to retrieve all parts in that kit (children) resulting in one parent charge line and several children charge lines.

When the service ticket is closed and invoiced, all of these items are sent to your accounting system. The parent item contains a price of \$29.95 with no assigned cost while the children items contain their individual costs but no prices. Any “real” inventory items will have their on hand values decremented as normal.

When this invoice is printed in Dynamite, you have the option of “hiding” the children charges so the customer only sees the single parent charge.

Kits (Bill of Material) are defined on the Dynamite Inventory screen and an explanation can be found in the User Guide. As an added feature of this function, you can also define up to six pricing levels that vary the price depending upon the time of day, the type of customer, or other such marketing distinction.

Accounting System News

Dynamite is tightly integrated with 15 versions of five different accounting systems published by 3 different companies. This month, we bring you the latest news from these publishers.



The AccountMate division hosted its annual reseller conference in San Rafael, CA from February 9th through the 12th. South By Southwest sponsored an exhibit featuring our 10-foot stick of Dynamite. We met many new resellers and some familiar names. We also shared war stories with our old friends from the SBT world. The Lounge Lizards performed and were wildly popular.

AccountMate has recently released version 6.0 of VAM and distributed samples of their new marketing material. The general mood of the attendees was very up beat and positive.

Our drive home was complicated by a massive rain storm that precipitated a mile long mud slide closing the Grape Vine mountain pass. Although the detour only added 20 miles to our trip it added four hours to our drive time. And guess where this storm ended up a week later. Can you spell S-N-O-W in Times Square?

AccountMate also announced the appointment of 14-year employee Tommy Tan as Vice President of Research and Development. A well deserved honor.

New AM office location: 88 Rowland Way #350, Novato, CA 94945. The phone number is the same.



Version 3.0 of Alere has just been released and now includes a Sales Order Configurator and a User Defined Order Entry Screen. The configurator is similar to Dynamite's Kitting function (see story) in that you can define a parent item and have the system automatically generate all of the children.

The new order entry screen is grid-based and functions much like a super intelligent Excel spreadsheet.

Dynamite is integrated with Alere versions 2.0 and 3.0.



Version 7.1 of the Pro Series has been released for both Visual FoxPro and Microsoft SQL. Dynamite has released the VFP integration to version 7.1 and is working on the 7.1 SQL integration.

All editions of ACCPAC Advantage Series (Enterprise, Corporate, Small Business and Discovery) are being upgraded, providing improved Web-services integration, expanded database support and performance improvements, as well as functional enhancements for international markets and overall ease-of-use. In addition, Multicurrency, National Accounts, and Optional Fields and Validation Tables have been newly packaged as optional modules across all editions. With version 5.1, ACCPAC is also the first accounting software vendor to include, at no additional charge, the IBM DB2 database with its software.

ACCPAC has acquired AGS Software, Inc. of Toronto including their point-of-sale (POS) software. The POS application offers extensive storefront automation, an intuitive web-based interface and support for multi-site operations. An addition to ACCPAC's suite of end-to-end business management applications, the product is fully integrated with ACCPAC Advantage Series accounting software. The product will be marketed as ACCPAC ePOS.

ACCPAC has also acquired eWare Limited of Dublin, Ireland. eWare is a developer of customer relationship management (CRM) software. A private label version of the eWare software, ACCPAC eCRM, has been actively marketed by ACCPAC for the past 18 months under an OEM agreement with eWare. The product will continue to be marketed as ACCPAC eCRM.

And finally, there are rumors of an impending merger between ACCPAC and AccountMate. Well, not a buyout but a marriage. Brian Austin, Director of Public Relations at AM is engaged to marry Susan Sheridan, the Senior VP of Marketing at ACCPAC. They've been friends for a long time and both worked at SBT. We wish them much happiness!

