

bBasell V3.01 © 1993, 1994 by Robert Bromley

COLLABORATORS

	<i>TITLE :</i> bBaseIII V3.01 © 1993, 1994 by Robert Bromley		
<i>ACTION</i>	<i>NAME</i>	<i>DATE</i>	<i>SIGNATURE</i>
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REVISION HISTORY

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Chapter 1

bBaseIII V3.01 © 1993, 1994 by Robert Bromley

1.1 bBaseIII V3.01 © 1993, 1994 by Robert Bromley

INTRODUCTION

THE REQUESTERS
bBaseIII

THE CURSOR KEYS

THE SCREEN GADGETS
Version 3.01

The PROGRESS BAR

THE NOTES OPTION
by

DESCRIPTION OF MENU ITEMS

OTHER FEATURES
Robert Bromley

SUMMARY OF KEYBOARD COMMANDS

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EXAMPLE DATABASES

THE COMPETITION
August 7, 1994

A NOTE ON ERROR MESSAGES

IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM!

1.2 INTRODUCTION

What is bBaseIII?
Feature Summary
Hardware Requirements
Software Requirements
Restrictions
To Order the Registered Version
Starting bBaseIII
The bBaseIII Screen
The Screen Colors
The Information Box
Copyrights

1.3 What is bBaseIII?

bBaseIII is a full-featured, graphically interfaced, reasonably fast and, I think you will agree, quite an easy-to-use database program. Basically, it will sort, search for, display and print out stored information, but wait, there's more!
Refer to Section 1.2 -

Feature Summary

.

Once a database has been loaded from disk, all modifications are done in computer memory, and will NOT be permanently saved until the database is saved to disk. This can be done using the menus, the function keys, or upon quitting.

Almost all functions of bBase may be accessed from the menus, and most also have keyboard equivalents. These are all described in Section 9 -

SUMMARY OF KEYBOARD COMMANDS

.

It multi-tasks extremely well, as it does not burn up CPU time while not actually performing operations.

bBaseIII was written in HiSoft BASIC Version 1.05, and compiled using the HiSoft BASIC Professional © compiler.

1.4 Feature Summary

Some of the features of bBaseIII are:

- * Very straightforward and EASY to use. (One user described it as having a "zero learning curve").
- * Complete Graphical User Interface.
- * Notes may be optionally attached to each record, independent of the sorting fields, which will store over 600 bytes of data.
- * 16 fields, plus 8 rows of Notes.
- * Incremental or decremental sort, on any field.
- * Uses a fast shell-sort algorithm.
- * Add or delete a field at any time.
- * Restore deleted records.
- * Save any or all records to an ASCII database file, that may be edited and/or imported into another program.
- * Save records in a format which can be (mail) merged into form letters created by popular word processors.
- * Merge bBaseIII databases.
- * Optionally display entire database, or a filtered list, a screenful at a time.
- * Print out a record, a filtered list, or the whole database, in many different formats.
- * Print mailing labels.
- * Reference to the documentation can be made from within the program, in hypertext mode if you use AmigaGuide or MultiView, or otherwise in ASCII style. The appropriate file will be loaded automatically.
- * Databases may be scrambled for security, and then restored.
- * Search in any/all field(s), or the "Notes" Area (if active).
- * Range Search, (less than or greater than) in any (or all) field(s).
- * Any record may be quickly accessed with just a few mouse-clicks.
- * If you don't like the default colors, you can specify your own.
- * Optionally disable the "Save to Disk" option to prevent accidental alteration of the database.
- * Well behaved in a multi-tasking environment.
- * See the Revision History file for a more complete list.

1.5 Hardware Requirements

Database programs can tend to gobble up large amounts of memory. bBaseIII is no exception. Since bBaseIII opens on it's own screen, and reserves memory to hold the entire database, it requires about 1 Meg. of available memory to run. bBaseIII_600 and the Demo version require about 550K.

Therefore, bBaseIII will not run on a basic 512K machine.

I have personally tested bBase on unaccelerated A500 and A2000 computers using WB1.2, WB1.3 and WB2.04, and an '030 A3000 running WB2.05 (does it ever fly on that machine!). Other users have told me that it also works "great" with a 40 mhz 68030 processor, some 32-bit SRAM, and an A4000 with WB3.0, so I think it will work on any Amiga.

1.6 Software Requirements

The arp.library MUST be present in your LIBS: directory for bBaseIII to run. This library is included with this package. Clicking on the Install_Lib icon will execute a script that will check which version of the library you already have, if any, and ask if you want the included one installed.

Some other standard AmigaDOS libraries, as well as Fonts:topaz.font (specifically, topaz 11), are also required.

1.7 Restrictions

bBaseIII: A database of approximately 640K without the Notes option, (500K with Notes), or 1250 records, whichever comes first.

bBaseIII_600: A database of approximately 290K without Notes, (220K with Notes), or 600 records, whichever comes first.

Both:

Maximum Number of Fields: 16

Maximum Number of Rows in the Notes area: 8

Maximum Field Length: 50 characters (76 characters in the Notes area)

Maximum Record Size: 800 characters (1408 characters with Notes enabled)

Maximum Length of Field Titles: 18 characters

Maximum Length of Database Name: 22 characters

1.8 To Order the Registered Version

bBaseIII is a shareware program. Having tried the Demo version, ↔ if you would like to obtain a copy of the Registered version, with the full 1250 record capability, just send your shareware registration fee to the address shown in Section 14 -

IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM!

.

The requested registration fee for this version is a minimum of \$18 U.S., or the equivalent in your currency, except:

1. Previously registered users of bBaseIII can obtain this upgraded version for:
 - \$10 U.S., if upgrading from version 1, or
 - \$ 5 U.S., if upgrading from version 2.
2. If shipping to Canadian addresses, Canadian dollars will suffice.

1.10 The bBaseIII Screen

The bBaseIII screen is a full (NTSC) size, high resolution, borderless, interlaced screen using 8 colors. For PAL users, the screen can be made taller by using the `-p` switch, or by specifying a larger value in

THE CONFIGURATION FILE

. It will autoload the Topaz 11 font if it is not already being used. This keeps the data in its proper place on the screen, and also makes it easier to read.

bBase does not have a back or front gadget. This means that some WB1.3 users may be unable to access any other screens, with the exception of using `<Left Amiga - N>` to return to the Workbench screen.

A "screen shuffler" program, of course, will solve this problem. To anyone who still does not have one of these programs, I highly recommend that you get one - they generally make life easier. There are a variety of shufflers available in Fred Fish's collection: AutoCLI, Mach (II, III, IV) and MouseAide to name just three, or if space is at a premium, try QMouse. There are two flavors of QMouse, one for WB1 and another for WB2. Both of these tiny little wonders do a lot in under 4K. As an aid to those who may have this problem, QMice will be included on the Registered disk.

On computers running AmigaDOS Release 2, the default `<Left Amiga - M>` combination of the IControl commodity seems to do the job well.

If getting to other screens is a real problem for you, as a last resort you can start bBase with the `-n` switch. (Refer to Section 1.7 -

Starting bBaseIII

). This will give you a small piece of the titlebar to grab, so you may drag the bBase screen down, exposing the other screens behind.

1.11 The Screen Colors

Most people seem to find the default screen colors acceptable, perhaps even pleasing. Some users have indicated, however, that these colors do not have enough contrast on their monitors (or TVs). I solved that problem in V2 with a built-in palette requester. However, this requester is not compatible with the libraries utilized in V3.

Custom colors are still available, but using a different, and, I think, better, approach. Better, because your custom colors will be loaded automatically each time bBase is run, rather than having to select them.

When bBaseIII is run, it looks in the S: directory for "bBase.prefs". Refer to Section 10 -

THE CONFIGURATION FILE

. If found, it will use the colors contained therein, otherwise, it will use the defaults. So how do I get my colors into this file, you ask? Well, it is fairly straight-forward, actually. First, you need to know the red, green and blue (RGB) values of the colors you want. The easiest way to get these, is to put a palette adjuster on the bBaseIII screen.

There is a palette adjuster included in the Utilities drawer of the Registered package, which is far superior to the one that Commodore provides. Among its many features, XColor V1.2 has the ability to jump from one screen to another. So, to get your RGB values:

1. Run XColor. It will appear on the Workbench screen.

2. From a shell window, run bBaseIII using the `-n` switch. (Refer to Section 1.7 -

Starting bBaseIII

). This is a special mode that makes the bBase window a bit narrower, so that a piece of the screen titlebar is visible at the top-left corner. Click on this piece, and holding the LMB down, drag the bBase screen down, exposing the XColor window.

3. Click on the "SCREEN" gadget. The XColor adjuster should now appear on the bBase screen. Drag the bBase screen back to the top of the monitor.

4. You will see the 8 bBase colors at the top, and 3 sliders labeled R, G and B. To the right of each slider is the value of its R, G and B component. This number is in Hex, ie. it will be either a number from 0 to 9, or a letter from A to F. If you click on the second color patch, which is cyan, you will see that the R slider is full to the left, showing a value of 0, while the G and B sliders are full to the right, showing a value of F.

5. This is a very versatile palette adjuster - read the enclosed documentation to understand all of its abilities. Play with the sliders until you get the colors just the way you want them (good luck!). When they are correct, click on the first color patch (upper left), and write down the RGB values for that color, separated by commas. As an example, the values for cyan would be: 0,F,F. On separate lines, write down the RGB values for the remaining 7 colors.

6. The Hex letters will now have to be changed to numbers, but this is easily done. Simply substitute 10 for any As, 11 for B, 12 for the Cs, 13 for D, 14 for E, and 15 for any Fs. Easy, eh? When you are finished, click on the XColor close gadget, and quit bBaseIII. These values must now be entered into the "S:bBase.prefs" file, replacing the existing values, using a text editor.

If I could simplify this procedure, I would. But as of now, the only alternative is to have no palette changing capability at all. At least this only has to be done once, then your colors are always available.

There are two example configuration files included. The first, "bBase_default.prefs", contains values identical to the defaults. If you copy this to S: and name it bBase.prefs, it will be used, but you would

not notice any difference. If you are planning to use a configuration file, I would recommend that you use this one, and make any required changes to it.

The other example, "bBase_demo.prefs", has a different color palette, and the -n switch is also activated for demonstration purposes. If this one is copied as "S:bBase.prefs" before bBaseIII is run, it will demonstrate how

THE CONFIGURATION FILE

can be used to get different colors. So, to get the colors YOU want, simply replace the color values in "bBase_default.prefs" with the values you determined by using XColor, copy it to S: and rename it "bBase.prefs", then run bBaseIII. It will find the file, and use the color values in it.

If the "S:bBase.prefs" file is present, but is not in the correct format, you will be notified, and the default vaules will be used.

1.12 The Information Box

This is the single line box at the bottom of the Main window. Messages and requesters will appear here to give and receive information that is required by the user and the program.

1.13 Copyrights

bBaseIII is © 1993, 1994 by Robert Bromley. All rights reserved.

This program, and its documentation, is provided "as is", without warranty of any kind, expressed or implied, including, but not limited to the implied warranties of merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose. Use this program at your own risk and discretion.

bBaseIII is shareware, and not Public Domain. The Demo version ONLY may be distributed, providing that this file is included, unaltered, with ALL distribution copies.

The Demo version is identical to the Registered version in all respects, except that it will not load databases of larger than about 220K, or save databases of larger than 30 records. This is enough to give you the "flavor" of the program.

Needless to say, it is illegal to alter the bBaseIII programs in any way.

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1.14 THE REQUESTERS

The ARP File Requester

The Input Requester

The Choice Requester

The Pop-Up Requester

1.15 The ARP File Requester

The requester used when asking for a file to load or save is the standard ARP file requester.

1.16 The Input Requester

This requester is used for general data input. It has full editing capabilities. Pressing <Ctrl - Q> will move the cursor to the Start of the text, <Ctrl - W> will jump the cursor to the beginning of the next Word, and <Ctrl - E> will move the cursor to the End of the text. It may be blanked at any time by pressing the <Tab> key.

Any time this requester is open, pressing <Esc> will close it. In this case, the data line will revert to what it was before the requester was opened, ie. the changes will be lost. To accept the changes, use either <F10>, or the <Return> key.

1.17 The Choice Requester

This is the "Are you sure?" type requester. It appears at the upper-left corner to provide information, or advise you of some impending action. Typically, it will give you the option to Proceed, or Cancel that action.

1.18 The Pop-Up Requester

If bBase requires information from the user that cannot be answered by just a Yes or No, this requester will appear, sometimes at mid-screen, and sometimes in the Information Box. This is the same as the Input Requester, except that the allowable input is sometimes restricted. EG, if you want to delete a field, you will be asked which one. If the database only has 7 fields, an answer of 8 will not be accepted.

1.19 THE CURSOR KEYS

If Input Requester is NOT Open

If the Input Requester IS Open

1.20 If Input Requester is NOT Open

Pressing the Cursor Up key will take you directly to the First Record.

The Cursor Down key displays the Last Record.

The Cursor Left key shows the Previous numerical Record, and the Cursor Right key will show the Next numerical Record.

You can also move through the records using the mouse.

Please note that for "browsing" through the database, the Left/Right cursor keys are the slowest way to do it. If you are looking for a particular record, I would encourage users to either search for it, or use the Alphabetic Jump Bar. This will be much faster.

(Refer to Section 4 -

THE SCREEN GADGETS
).

1.21 If the Input Requester IS Open

Whenever you are in Edit mode (when the input requester is open, ← so that you may enter or change data), Cursor Left/Right moves the cursor within the gadget, while Cursor Up/Down moves through the fields. You may also position the cursor by clicking in the requester, or by using the Ctrl keys. (Refer to Section 2.2 - The Input Requester).

1.22 THE SCREEN GADGETS

At the top left corner of the screen, there is a gadget labeled ← "Esc". Clicking on this gadget is the same as pressing the <Esc> key. The action performed when this gadget is clicked depends on your present situation, and is explained in the relevant sections, but generally it will cancel an action, or close a window. If no extra windows are open, it will initiate the Quit sequence.

Clicking in the program title box is equivalent to selecting "About" in the Project menu.

Just above the upper-right corner of the Data area is the Tag box. Any records which are currently on The Tag List will be identified by a check-mark in this box. Clicking in this gadget will act as a toggle. If the currently displayed record is not on the Tag List, ie. not "tagged", then clicking here will add it to the list. If the displayed record is tagged, then clicking here will remove it from the list. Pressing <T> is the keyboard equivalent for this feature. (Refer to Section 7.3.3 -

Tag All
) , and Section 7.3.4 -
UnTag All <U>
).

The number of records currently on the Tag List, if any, will be displayed just to the left of the Tag box.

Clicking in the "Current Database:" box (or pressing the <F1> key) is equivalent to selecting "Open an Existing Database" in the Project menu.

Between the "Current Database:" box and the "Record Number:" box are four small, white arrow-heads. These gadgets represents the cursor keys, and you can move about the database using these gadgets and the mouse instead of the cursor keys, if you so desire, as follows:

Clicking on the Up Arrow will take you directly to the First Record.

Clicking on the Down Arrow will take you to the Last Record. The Left Arrow will show the Previous numerical Record, and the Right Arrow will show the Next numerical Record.

Just outside of the horizontal arrow gadgets are invisible Fast Forward (or Reverse) gadgets. Clicking in these areas will send you forward (or backward) through the database 10 records at a time. This number is user configurable. (Refer to Section 7.4.4 - Fast Forward|Reverse).

The keyboard equivalent of these "fast" gadgets are the "<" and ">" keys.

Clicking on the "Record Number:" box (or pressing <G> on the keyboard) will bring up the pop-up requester, asking for the number of a record to "Go to". After entering a legal number, the requested record will be displayed. Press <Esc> to cancel.

Clicking in the Title Area is equivalent to selecting "Field Titles" in the Edit menu.

Clicking in the Data Area (or pressing <Return>) will put you in Data Edit mode.

Clicking in the Note Area (or pressing <N> or the <Space Bar>) will put you in Note Edit mode.

There is an "Alphabetic Jump Bar" located just below the Notes Area, consisting of the letters a to z. Clicking on one of these letters will open a window showing all of the records that begin with the selected letter, in the field that the database is sorted on. EG, if your first two fields are First Name and Last Name, and the database is sorted on the second field, then clicking on "h" will show all records of persons whose LAST name begins with "H". If no last name begins with "H", you will be informed. The keyboard equivalents to clicking on these letters are the <Shift - Letter> keys - eg, <Shift - H> would do the same as described above. The database must be sorted after adding records for this feature to always work correctly.

I have reluctantly extended this feature to include the fields which are sorted numerically. Pressing one of the UNshifted number keys, from 1 to 0, will show you all records beginning with that number, IF the database was sorted on a field containing numbers. Otherwise, you will be informed that there are no records beginning with the selected number in the sort field. The problem with this is that if you are aligning your numeric entries, (Refer Section 7.3.1 -

Search Fields <F6>
, for

a discussion on aligning numeric entries), you will not be able to use this feature to go to these records. At any rate, this restriction only applies to databases which are sorted on fields with numeric data that must be aligned for sorting or searching purposes, which I suspect will not be too many.

To help you remember which field the database is sorted on, after a sort has been done, an "s" will be displayed between the Title and Data areas next to the sorted field.

1.23 The PROGRESS BAR

When time consuming actions are being performed, eg. loading, searching, saving, sorting, etc., a Progress Bar will appear, in place of the Jump Bar, to assure you that "something is happening", and visually display to you just how the job is progressing. The length of the bar represents the number of records involved in whatever operation you are performing.

1.24 THE NOTES OPTION

bBase may be run with, or without the Notes option active. When \leftrightarrow a database is first created, you will be asked if you want to activate this option. When a database is loaded, bBase will determine if this option should be activated, and react accordingly.

Without the Notes option, the record storage is limited to 16 fields, for a total capacity of 800 characters. This will result in faster searches, sorts, saves, etc., as there is less information to process.

With the Notes option, each record has available an additional Notes area of up to 608 characters, which can be searched, but not sorted. This increases each record's capacity, but slows down program processing somewhat. Also, the database will not be able to hold as much data, as some of the allotted memory is reserved for a full Notes area, whether it is used or not. (Refer to Section 1.5 -

Restrictions
) . The choice is
yours.

The Notes option may be activated or de-activated, and the number of Note rows set, at any time from within the program.

(Refer to Section 7.4.3 -
No. of Rows in Notes Area
, Section 7.8.1 -
Enable
, and Section 7.8.2 -
Disable
).

As your databases become progressively larger, operations naturally become progressively slower. If you find that operations are TOO slow, then, if feasible, set aside some data fields as comment fields, and disable the Notes option. This will speed things up enormously.

1.25 DESCRIPTION OF MENU ITEMS

The most logical way to describe the operation of bBaseIII is probably by describing the menu operations. The keyboard equivalents, where applicable, are shown along with the menu titles.

Project Menu

Sort Menu

Search Menu

Edit Menu

Print Menu

Add Menu

Delete Menu

Notes Menu

1.26 Project Menu

Create a New Database <F1>

Open an Existing Database <F2>

Show All Records <A>

Show Tagged Records

Save Database <F3>

Save As

Save Tagged Records

Merge a Database

Show Available Memory <M>

Encrypt|Decrypt a File

Help <Help>

About

Quit <Esc>

1.27 Create a New Database <F1>

(If you are working on an existing database, and it has been altered, you will be asked if you want to save it before creating a new one).

This will bring up the ARP file requester, asking for a name for your new database. Any filename of 22 characters or less will do.

A requester will then ask if you want to activate the Notes option. If you respond <Y>es, you will be asked how many rows the Notes area will have. The maximum is 8 rows of 76 characters each, for a total capacity of 608 bytes. The number of Notes area rows may be altered anytime. (Refer to Section 7.4.3 -

No. of Rows in Notes Area
)

Next you are asked how many fields the new database will require. There may be up to 16 fields in each database. Fields may be added or deleted at any time.

You are then asked for the TITLES of each field of the database. Each field title may be a maximum of 18 characters long, and may be changed at will. (Refer to Section 7.4.1 -

Field Titles
)

A "(1)" will appear, along with the input requester. Enter the title of your first field, eg. Last Name, First Name, Company, Address, or anything else. When it is correct, hit <Return>, and a "(2)" will appear on the next line with the requester. Enter the title of the second, and all other fields, in this manner.

The screen will now show all the field titles,

The Information Box
, the

filename as first entered, a blank Data area, and the record number, which at this point will be "1". The total number of records is continuously displayed beside the record number. It will now also show "of 1".

The input requester will now appear in the first field of the first record, ready for you to enter data. Enter the data.

NOTE:

Double quotes are not accepted in any data field, as that would mess up the alignment of all the following fields. Single quotes are OK.

A data entry may be a maximum of 50 characters long. When it is correct, hit <Return>, and the requester will move to the second field. When all

fields are complete, (or you press <F10>), the requester will close. To add more records, select "Add - A Record" from the menu, or press <F10> again. Complete all records in this manner. In this version, there is a limitation of 1250 records.

1.28 Open an Existing Database <F2>

If you have previously created a database, and the ".bbase" file ↔ for that database is stored on a disk, then use this item to access it. If you are working on an existing database, and it has been altered, you will be asked if you want to save it before loading another.

Select the database file in the requester, and that database will be retrieved and shown on screen. At this time, the available memory and the relative database size will be briefly displayed, unless this operation was suppressed in

THE CONFIGURATION FILE
, or with the
"-m" switch. Refer to Section 3 -
THE CURSOR KEYS
, and Section 4 -

THE SCREEN GADGETS
, for instructions on moving about the database.

While a record is displayed,
The Information Box
will instruct you to
press "<Return> to Change Data". Do so, and the requester will appear in the first field, with that field's data. <Return> or <Cursor Up/ Cursor Down> to the field you want to change, and make the changes. At this point, you may either <Return> through all fields, or press <F10> to exit Edit mode. The altered record is now displayed.

NOTE:

ANY time you are in Edit mode, whether entering, changing or searching for data, pressing <F10> will exit Edit mode, and use the data shown when you exited. Pressing <Esc> will also exit Edit mode, but any changes made to the last line will be lost.

1.29 Show All Records <A>

If you want to quickly glance at more than one record at a time, this will open a full-sized window, and display the first 60 or so characters of ALL records, one record to a line. Use the scroll bar to see all of the records, and click on "Cancel" to leave this function. If you see a record you want to examine in detail, just click on it. You will then exit the Display window, and return to the Main Screen, with the requested record displayed.

1.30 Show Tagged Records

This works the same as
Show All Records <A>
, except that ONLY the
tagged (Refer to Section 7.3.1 -
Search Fields <F6>
) records are
displayed.

1.31 Save Database <F3>

If the database has been altered since last saved, it will be saved to disk under the current filename, after confirmation. The file will have the extension ".bbase" automatically appended.

If it has NOT been altered, you will be so informed, and given the opportunity to abort the save.

NOTE:

Saving a large database may be a slow process on an unaccelerated computer. If you find that this is the case, I suggest you save it to RAM: first, then use the AmigaDOS or Workbench "Copy" function to copy it to disk.

1.32 Save As

You will be prompted for a name to save the database. It is not necessary include the ".bbase" extension at this time - it will be appended automatically.

1.33 Save Tagged Records

The tagged records may be saved as a separate .bbase file. It may be useful to use just some records as the seed of a new database. This is also how records are copied from one database to another - save them using this function, then merge the resulting database to another one.

1.34 Merge a Database

Two similar databases can be merged together. In order for this to work, both databases must have the same number of fields in both the Data and Notes areas. If the field titles are different, you will be informed, however the merge may continue.

WARNING:

If you try to merge a database that is too large to fit into available memory, the program will abort with an error. The database size can be checked with the AmigaDOS "List" command, and available memory can be checked by pressing the <M> key, (Refer to Section 7.1.9 -

Show Available Memory <M>
) . If there is any chance that the database will not fit into memory, save the database before merging. IF the program aborts, any changes made since the last save will be lost.

1.35 Show Available Memory <M>

This repeats the action which can be performed when a database ←
is loaded.
The remaining memory available to bBaseIII is checked. If it is low, you will be advised. (Refer to Section 8.2 -
The Low Memory Warning
) .

The number of available bytes remaining are then shown, along with the approximate relative size of your database. This is shown as a percentage of the maximum size, taking into account both the number of available records remaining, and the number of available bytes remaining.

1.36 Encrypt|Decrypt a File

For people who have databases with "sensitive" data, (or for people who are just plain secretive), bBase offers the capability of "scrambling" a database - or any other file, for that matter.

The file requester will appear. Select the file to be scrambled. You are then asked for a password. After confirmation, the file will then be read in, scrambled, and written back to disk under the same name. Examination of the file will now show that the file characters have all been changed, many of them are now gibberish.

To restore the file, you need only select this menu item again. Select the same file, and enter the same password. The file will then be read in, and written back to disk in its original form. For what it is worth, executable programs, as well as data files, may be scrambled and restored - try it with a copy of bBase!

It should go without saying that it is essential that the same password be entered to unscramble the file as was used to scramble it. If the wrong password is entered, the scrambled file will be re-scrambled. The only way to get it back now is to select this item again, and enter the last password. This will restore the file to the first scrambled state. Now, if you can still remember the first password, run this file through once more using it to restore the file to its original state.

Please note that this is a time-consuming operation on large files, and it does not utilize the Progress Bar.

1.37 Help <Help>

This is used for reference to the documentation from within the program. ↔

Both the location of your preferred text reader and the location of the documentation files may be read from

THE CONFIGURATION FILE

. If they

are not, you will be prompted for the reader's location, and the doc files must be in the current directory. If all is well, the text reader will be run with the file loaded for viewing. If either the text reader or the documentation are not where they should be, you will be informed.

If you select AmigaGuide or MultiView as your text reader, the file "bBase.guide" will automatically be loaded. If you select another text reader, the ASCII file "bBase.doc" will be loaded. Both of these files are included.

For hypertext users, there is also an index file provided. If used, bBase.index should be in the same directory as bBase.guide. Clicking on the "Index" gadget will take you to the index, which is an alphabetical list of relevant keywords. Clicking on one of those keywords will bring up the appropriate section of the bBase.guide document.

If you do not use a hypertext reader, I highly recommend MuchMore © as the reader of choice. MuchMore should also be included with this package.

NOTE:

When MuchMore runs, it opens on top of the bBaseIII screen, as you would expect. However, when AmigaGuide runs, it opens on the Workbench screen, behind the bBaseIII screen. Therefore, although it may appear as though nothing has happened when this is selected, if you push the bBaseIII screen to the back (default <Left Amiga - M>), you should see the bBase.guide help screen. (Also, when you Quit the text reader, you could end up back on the Workbench screen, and have to <Left Amiga - M> to get back to bBase). Refer to Section 1.8 -

The bBaseIII Screen

, for information on screen shufflers. I hope that by the next release, I will know enough about public screens to be able to avoid this situation.

The entire AmigaGuide package must be distributed intact, and is too large to fit on a disk with the bBaseIII package. It is therefore not included, but can be obtained on Fred Fish Disk 920, and other places.

1.38 About

The usual stuff, including the version number.

1.39 Quit <Esc>

If the database has been altered, you will be asked if you want to save it before quitting. The <Q> key can also be used for this function.

1.40 Sort Menu

You may sort the records in the database based on the data in ↔ any field.

The sort algorithm is designed to be most efficient when sorting a database which is already mostly sorted, as will be the case with databases over 90% of the time. Initial sorts will take a little bit longer. Naturally, the larger the database, the longer it takes.

After the database has been sorted, an "s" will be displayed between the Title and Data areas, so that you will always know at a glance which field the database has been sorted on. If the database was sorted INcrementally, the "s" will be in the dark background color, and if it was sorted DEcrementally, the "s" will be a cyan color.

NOTE:

Any time that the database is sorted,
The Tag List
will be lost,
(ie. all records become "UnTagged"), since sorting the database
scrambles the list, and renders it meaningless.

Incremental Sort <F4>

Decremental Sort <F5>

1.41 Incremental Sort <F4>

The requester will ask which field you want to sort on. The records will be incrementally sorted on that field, and record number 1 of the new list will be shown.

1.42 Decremental Sort <F5>

Same as
 Incremental Sort <F4>
 , except records are sorted and displayed
 from Z-A, or 9-0.

1.43 Search Menu

Search Fields <F6>

 Search Notes

 Tag All

 UnTag All <U>

 Tag Invert

 Next Tagged Record <X>

 Goto a Record <G>

1.44 Search Fields <F6>

The input requester will appear in the first field of a blank ↔
 record.
 <Return> or <Cursor Up/Down> to the field that contains the data you
 want to search for, and enter it. A search string may be entered in more
 than one field. When all the criteria has been entered, <Return> through
 all the fields, or press <F10>. All records that match ALL the search
 criteria become
 The Tag List
 , and the first match is displayed. When a
 match is found, you may Print it, Cancel the search, UnTag (or ReTag) the
 record, Delete the record, or Review all the records on the Tag List.
 (Refer to Section 7.1.4 -
 Show Tagged Records
). Pressing <Any Other
 Key> will display the next matching record in the list. Searches are NOT
 case dependent.

If a match cannot be found, you will be advised "No Matching Records".

Range Search is also available. EG., if you want to search an address
 database for all names before Jones, or after Smith, simply add a "<"
 or a ">" immediately before the name, with no intervening space.
 Or, if you had a field containing birth years, you could find all those
 born before (or after), for example, 1965, by entering "<1965".
 You could also combine the two, and find all those entries before

(alphabetically) "Jones", and who were born after 1965.

Equal-or-less-than and equal-or-greater-than may also be used by preceding the search string with "`=<`" or "`=>`" respectively. Note that the equals sign must come first; "`<=`" will not work.

Bear in mind that in a search for entries "`<p`", (which will be treated as "`<P`", because search is case independent), bBase will find all entries up to and including all of the "O" entries, as you would expect. But, if you search for "`>p`", the found entries will not start with the Qs, as you might expect, but will show the Ps as well. This is because, to a computer, "pa", or "pill", or "pasquale" are all greater than just "p". So, if you want to search for Qs and above, you should enter "`>pzz`", or better still, "`>q`".

Note also that bBase does not employ the concept of field TYPES, ie, there are no numeric fields - all fields are of the string type. Therefore, if you are storing numbers in a field, (eg. 9, 60, & 500), and you search for all records "`<500`", bBase will report "No Matching Records". This is because all strings are compared on a character-by-character basis. So, when the first character is examined, all other first characters are compared to "5". All we find is a "9" and a "6", so bBase deduces that there are no records less than 500.

When entering numeric data that you may wish to search or sort, therefore, you must ensure that the data is properly aligned. If you will be entering numeric data with three digits, they must all be entered with three digits. So, when entering "9", it must be entered as "009" or " 9", and the "60" entered as "060" or " 60". You will then find that searches and sorts operate as expected. Searching for entries of "`<70`" must now, of course, be entered as "`< 70`" or "`<070`".

1.45 Search Notes

The requester will appear in the first field of a blank record. Enter the string you want to search the Notes area for. Once the string has been entered, the search will begin, and the first record which contains the entered string in the Notes area will be displayed. You now have the same options as described above - Print the Record, (the Notes may be optionally included, if ALL fields of the record are to be printed), Cancel, Delete, Review the tagged records, or Display the Next tagged record.

NOTE:

Although the search data is entered in a field, the fields have nothing to do with this search. It is just a handy place to enter it.

1.46 Tag All

All of the records in the database are "Tagged", ie. added to ↔
the Tag

List. (Refer to Section 4 -
THE SCREEN GADGETS
).

1.47 UnTag All <U>

All records are "UnTagged".
The Tag List
is discarded, and all
references to tagged records in the menus are ghosted. This may be handy
if you want to create a new Tag List by clicking in the Tag Box of some
individual records. Otherwise, the tagged records would be added to the
current Tag List.

1.48 Tag Invert

Inverts
The Tag List
. All Tagged records become UnTagged, and all
records that were UnTagged become Tagged.

1.49 Next Tagged Record <X>

If you interrupt your "Display the Next Tagged Record" sequence, ←
bBase
will remember where you were in the sequence. Selecting this item will
immediately display the next tagged record after the last one you have
already looked at. As mentioned above, if you should sort the database,
this item will become inoperable.

When the last record on
The Tag List
has been displayed, you will be
advised, "End of Tag List". Selecting this item now, will skip through
the tagged records again, starting at the top of the list.

1.50 Goto a Record <G>

Activates the Goto a Record requester - the same as pressing <G ←
>.
(Refer to Section 4 -
THE SCREEN GADGETS
).

1.51 Edit Menu

Field Titles
Swap Position of 2 Fields
No. of Rows in Notes Area
Fast Forward|Reverse
Text Reader

1.52 Field Titles

Use this item to change the titles of your fields. The data itself is unaffected by this procedure.

1.53 Swap Position of 2 Fields

Exchanges the position of two fields and their titles in the database. EG, move field 3 to where field 7 was, and visa versa.

1.54 No. of Rows in Notes Area

The number of rows in the Notes area may be changed at any time. No loss of data will occur except if the number of rows is reduced. Then, naturally, data contained in rows greater than the new number of rows will be lost. In this instance, you will be notified that data will be lost if you proceed, and how many records will be affected. You then have the option to Abort, Proceed, or View a list of the affected records, (which will also abort the procedure).

NOTE:

If the number of rows is reduced, and later increased before leaving the database, the lost data will be recovered.

Fewer rows result in slightly faster searches, sorts, etc.

1.55 Fast Forward|Reverse

The "Fast Forward" arrow gadgets will skip through the database a default 10 records per click, but this is user-configurable. Use this item to set your own number (maximum 999). This value is not stored in the configuration file, but is stored with each database. Therefore, you can have a different value for each database, depending on its size.

1.56 Text Reader

Using the ARP File Requester, indicate the location of the text reader you want to use to read the bBase.guide or bBase.doc file. To have the proper reader always available, its location should be entered into

THE CONFIGURATION FILE

.

1.57 Print Menu

With the Print Menu, you can:

- Print a record, some records, or the entire database, either to the printer, or to an AmigaDOS file.
- Create a data file to Mail-Merge with a word processor.
- Print mailing labels, and more.

Displayed Record <F8>

Select Print Options <F9>

Top Margin

Form-feeds

Create Word Processor Data File

1.58 Displayed Record <F8>

This item will first ask how many fields are to be printed, and then in which column position, from 1 to 80, to start printing (in case you want to print onto a mailing label, or directly onto an envelope). If

THE CONFIGURATION FILE

was found at start-up, the default column position will be read from there. Otherwise, the default is 30.

If you elect to print all of the fields, you will then be asked if you


want the Notes printed as well (if this option is active). If you elect to have the Notes printed, you will then be asked if you also want the blank lines printed. Some people may want this to make a more symmetrical report. Otherwise, only those lines containing data will be printed. (If you want the odd blank line to be included as a "spacer", then just put 1 blank space on that line, and the space will be printed).

It will then send all characters of the requested number of fields (and Notes) of the currently displayed record to the PRT: device.

NOTE:

If the alignment of the report is not correct, switch the printer Off, then back On, just prior to using this item.

1.59 Select Print Options <F9>

Opens the Print Options Window from which various formats of  reports and mailing labels may be chosen. Select from this window using the mouse, keyboard, or the Up/Down cursor keys. The keyboard equivalents are the underlined letters of each label.

At the top, there are toggle gadgets to select "Print All Records" or "Print Tagged Records"; "Bold On" or "Bold Off"; and "Print to PRT:" or "Print to File".

Print All Records will do just that. Print Tagged Records will print all currently tagged records. This toggle is inoperative if there are no tagged records.

Bold allows you to select either Bold or Normal print styles. Although you may select Bold On at any time, it is only effective, on my printer at least, if the Pitch is set to Pica (80 characters per line). Other printers may not have this restriction.

PRT: or File determines whether the requested records will be printed, or copied to a file. In the latter case, the file requester will appear, and you may specify the filename to copy the records to. The default is "RAM:bBase_report".

At the bottom are gadgets labeled "Print!", "Help" and "Cancel". "Cancel" is self-explanatory. "Help" opens a Help Window which explains the terms used in the Print Options Window, so this information is not included here. "Print!" will print (or copy) the selected records using the selected format. The <Return> key is another keyboard equivalent for "Print!".

Hardcopy Reports

Mailing Labels

1.60 Hardcopy Reports

Database reports can be obtained in these formats:

Adjacent Single Line (Pica, Elite or Condensed).

The "Notes" attached to your records may optionally be also printed out using this format. Follow the prompts.

Aligned Single Line (Pica, Elite or Condensed).

Block, 2 across

Block, 3 across

Super Space Saver (Block, 5 across)

These are explained in the Help Window, but try them all, and see which one (or more) best suits your needs.

With each report there will be a title line, containing the name of the database, and, if your system is showing a current date, the date of the printing. You will also be given the opportunity of inserting a (maximum) 26 character comment on the title line, between the title and the date. Just type it in when prompted.

Along the top of the Data area are 4 colored pixels. These pixels will align with the data entry cursor at the 24, 25, 38 and 43 character positions. As some of the above reports are truncated to these number of characters (Refer to the Help Window), they are a guide to indicate that the data beyond will not be printed when some print options are selected.

1.61 Mailing Labels

Mailing labels of 15/16 inch, and 1 7/16 inch, in 1-across roll ← type,
and 2 or 3-across sheet type are all supported.

If you have selected a mailing label option in the Print Options Window, when you click on "Print!" you will be asked whether your labels are 1, 2 or 3-across, how many fields of your database you want printed on the label, and in which column you want the printing to start. The column defaults work for me, but your paper may be aligned a bit differently. Once this information is received, the printing (or copying) operation will start.

If you tell bBase you want, for example, 4 fields printed, then the first 4 fields will be printed, in numerical order. Make sure that these are the ones you want printed. You can temporarily move the fields around, if desired, to get the alignment you want.

(Refer to Section 7.4.2 -

Swap Position of 2 Fields
).

Due to the size constraints of the labels, there are limits on the number of characters of each field, and the number of fields, that this function will print. This information is in the Help Window.

1.62 Top Margin

The default is to have no specified top margin, but users may specify one if they wish. You will be told the current setting, and prompted for a new one. The top margin on printed reports will be equal to 1/8 inch times the number you enter. EG, if you enter "4", then printed reports will start 1/2 inch down from the top of the page.

If you enter a setting into
THE CONFIGURATION FILE
, that number will
be used as the default.

I expect this may be particularly useful to those using sheet-feed printers, especially with mailing labels or forms.

1.63 Form-feeds

Form-feeds may be generated at any position, or suppressed entirely.

You will be told the current setting (Default, Suppressed, or the setting you have selected), and be prompted for a new one.

The Default is to generate a form-feed after 62 lines of an Adjacent or Aligned report (there will also be the Title line on the first page), or approximately the same for a Block report. (bBase will attempt to keep the entire block on the same page, so this will vary somewhat). When printing mailing labels, the default caters to tractor-fed forms, ie, the print is continuous. If you find this unsatisfactory, you may enter a different setting into

THE CONFIGURATION FILE
and that setting will
be used.

Suppressed means that NO form-feeds are generated by bBase. There have been cases of other programs form-feeding along with bBase, resulting in a lot of waste paper. Use this if you want another program to do the form-feeding.

At the prompt, enter "0" to get the Default, "-1" to suppress form-feeds, or any other number to customize your form-feed setting.

If you have 10 rows of 1 inch sheet-fed mailing label forms, then 60 would be a logical setting. For 7 rows of 1 1/2 inch labels, 63 should work. Experiment, and use whatever works for your printer.

1.64 Create Word Processor Data File

This will save all of the tagged records in a format that will be accepted by the selected word processor as a secondary, or data file in a Mail Merge operation. So far, WordPerfect, Final Copy, Final Writer and ProWrite word processors are supported. You will be asked how many fields of the records to use, and then the file requester will ask for a filename to save the data file. The default is "RAM:bBase_merge".

I hope to eventually make this feature compatible with other word processors, but so far I do not have the information on the format required by others. If your word processor is not listed, try one that is - the format just might be the same.

1.65 Add Menu

```
Add a Field
Add a Record <F10>
Add Record At
Displayed Record <C>
```

1.66 Add a Field

If you do not already have the full complement of 16 fields, ←
this item
will add a blank field, in a designated location, with a title
consisting of all dots. The title may be modified at any time.
(Refer to Section 7.4.1 -
Field Titles
).

1.67 Add a Record <F10>

Positions you at an empty record, with the input requester open,
ready for you to enter data into the first field of the new record.
Use the <Esc> key to abort if you arrived here by mistake.
The new record will be at the end of the database.

1.68 Add Record At

Same as
Add a Record <F10>
, except that you will be prompted for a
record number, the current record number being the default. The new
record will be inserted into the desired spot in the database.

1.69 Displayed Record <C>

This item will copy the record which is presently being displayed, and add it as the last record. bBase will then move to this new, last record, display it, and open the input requester. It assumes that you will not want two identical records, and will be wanting to make some changes to it. If this is not the case, just hit <Esc>. This will be very handy if you are entering similar records - it will be easier to make some corrections to an existing record, than enter the whole new record in from scratch.

1.70 Delete Menu

Delete a Field
Displayed Record
All Tagged Records <D>
UNdelete a Record

1.71 Delete a Field

You will be asked which field you want to delete. As usual, press <Esc> to abort. The requested field, and all information contained in that field in all records will be deleted.

1.72 Displayed Record

After confirmation, the record currently displayed is deleted.

1.73 All Tagged Records <D>

After confirmation, all of the tagged records are deleted.
To preview exactly which records will be deleted, refer to
Section 7.1.4 -

Show Tagged Records

.

1.74 UNdelete a Record

Any deleted record can be undeleted. A list, similar to "Show All Records", is presented, showing all of the deleted records. Just click on the one you want, and it will be restored as the current record number. If you want it restored to the END of the database, then click on the blank gadget to the right of the slider before you click on the record to be restored.

1.75 Notes Menu

Enable

Disable

Edit <N> or <Space Bar>

1.76 Enable

If the Notes option is currently disabled, this will enable ↔
notes.

The database structure will be re-written to allow a default number of four note rows per record. This number can be changed anytime.

(Refer to Section 7.4.3 -

No. of Rows in Notes Area

). If this feature

is used, the database must be saved, and then re-opened before being used further, or it will become corrupted. If you elect to proceed, this action will occur automatically.

1.77 Disable

If the Notes option is currently enabled, this will disable notes. All data in the Notes area will be lost, if the action is not aborted at the next requester. The database must now be saved, and then re-opened prior to further use. If you elect to proceed, this action will occur automatically.

1.78 Edit <N> or <Space Bar>

The program is put into Notes mode. Clicking inside the Notes area will accomplish the same thing. To Edit the Notes, just press <Return>. It works identically to the Data area of the Main Screen, except that the keyboard combinations of <Ctrl - N>, <Ctrl - D> and <Ctrl - U> are used to INsert, Delete or UNdelete a row.

<Ctrl - N> will INsert a blank row at the active row, and all following rows move down 1 position. <Ctrl - D> will Delete the active row, and all following rows move up 1 position. <Ctrl - U> will UNdelete, or restore the previously deleted row to the active row, and all following rows move down 1 position. In the Insert and UNdelete cases, if there is data in the last row, you will be advised that it will be lost, and given the chance to abort. As in the Main Data Screen, the <Tab> key will blank the row, and no other rows will move.

Pressing <Esc> will exit the Notes Edit mode, and any changes made to the active row since it became active, will be ignored. Pressing <F10> will exit the Notes Edit mode with all changes intact.

While in Notes mode, (but not Editing Notes), press to delete the entire Note attached to that record. To leave Notes mode, press <Esc>, <F10>, or the <Space Bar>.

1.79 OTHER FEATURES

The 'Disable Save' Option

The Low Memory Warning

The Tag List

Cut and Paste Operations

1.80 The 'Disable Save' Option

As a simple security device, mainly as a guard against someone accidentally altering or erasing data, I have added an option which will disable the ability to save database changes to disk.

To disable saves, press <Ctrl - S> simultaneously.

The Information Box

will briefly inform you that saves are disabled, and now any ↵ attempt to

save the database to disk will be circumvented. In this case, upon quitting, a requester will ask if you want to save the database (as usual). If you select "Save", a second requester will inform you that the Save option has been disabled. To save the database, at the next

requester, "Do you Really want to Quit?", select "Cancel", re-enable saves, and quit again.

If you are running bBase from the CLI, using the "-s" switch on the command line will start bBase with the saves already disabled. If you are utilizing

```

    THE CONFIGURATION FILE
    , entering "1" on the appropriate
line will also do the same.

```

The <Ctrl - S> combination will toggle between Save Enabled and Save Disabled. A message will appear briefly in

```

    The Information Box
    to keep
you informed of the current status as it changes.

```

1.81 The Low Memory Warning

```

    When bBaseIII is run, it reserves about 980K of memory to use ←
    for
database storage in RAM, arrays, etc. No matter how much RAM your
computer has, this is all that is available to bBase!

```

When a database is first loaded, bBase will check the available memory left in the program pool (unless you have taken action to suppress this check). If the memory available to bBase is less than 5K, this means that very few more records may be added before the program will generate an error message.

You will be advised if this low memory situation exists. Press <Any Key> to cancel the warning. The recommended action is:

1. If you are using bBaseIII_600, start using bBaseIII.
2. If feasible, disable the Notes option.
3. Trim down the size of your database by deleting some old records, or some of the record notes.
4. If you cannot get all of your information into one database, some users have split the information over two databases. The split can be, eg, alphabetical (Names A-M, and Names N-Z); chronological (Invoices up to 1992, Invoices after 1992); or catagorical (Classical Tapes, Pop Tapes).
5. Drop me a line. It's possible that a custom version of bBase that will set aside more memory (if you have it), will solve the problem. For a \$7 fee, I will attempt to create a "customized" version. Tell me what you need.
6. Perhaps another program would serve you better.


```

(Refer to Section 12 -
    THE COMPETITION
).

```

The available memory can be checked any time by using the

```
Show Available Memory <M>
```

item in the Project menu.

1.82 The Tag List

The Tag List is usually created by a Search operation. Any matching records found by a search become the Tag List, and are indicated by a checkmark in the Tag Box.

Records may be added to (or deleted from) the Tag List by clicking in the Tag Box. If there are no records currently on the Tag List, clicking in the Tag Box will create a Tag List of that one record.

1.83 Cut and Paste Operations

Cut, Copy and Paste are fully supported in bBaseIII, (they're ← just called something else).

To Cut a record, just delete it.
(Refer to Section 7.7.2 -
Displayed Record
).

To Paste it somewhere else, go to where you want it pasted, and undelete it. (Refer to Section 7.7.4 -
UNdelete a Record
).

To Copy a record within the program, press <C>.
(Refer to Section 7.6.4 -
Displayed Record <C>
).

To Copy a record for use with another program, tag it, open the Print Options Window, (Refer to Section 7.5.2 -
Select Print Options <F9>
),
then "Print Tagged Records" to "a File", in whichever format you prefer.

1.84 SUMMARY OF KEYBOARD COMMANDS

Generally, pressing the <Esc> key will close a window or ← requester, if one is open, abandoning the last change; pressing <F10> will close the

window or requester leaving all changes intact.

With the Main Window Open

With the Input Requester Open

With Print Options Window Open

1.85 With the Main Window Open

Create a New Database	<F1>
Open an Existing Database	<F2>
Save the Database	<F3>
Incremental Sort	<F4>
Decremental Sort	<F5>
Search the Fields	<F6>
Print the Displayed Record to the Printer	<F8>
Open the Print Options Window	<F9>
Add a Record	<F10>
Show All Records	<A>
Copy the Displayed Record	<C>
Delete All Tagged Records	<D>
Goto a Record	<G>
Show Available Memory	<M>
Edit the Notes	<N> or <Space Bar>
Tag or Untag the Displayed Record	<T>
UnTag All Records	<U>
Display the Next Tagged Record	<X>
Saves Enable/Disable (toggle)	<Ctrl - S>
Fast Forward/Reverse through the Records	< or > (actually: , or .)
View All Records Beginning with a Letter	<Shift - Letter>
View All Records Beginning with a Number	<Number>
Delete the Displayed Record	
Quit	<Esc> or <Q>

1.86 With the Input Requester Open

Clear the Requester	<Tab>
Place Cursor at Start of Text	<Ctrl - Q>
Jump Cursor to Start of Next Word	<Ctrl - W>
Place Cursor at End of Text	<Ctrl - E>

Plus, if you are in Notes Edit Mode

INsert a Row	<Ctrl - N>
Delete a Row	<Ctrl - D>
UnDelete a Row	<Ctrl - U>

1.87 With Print Options Window Open

Print All Records/Tagged Records	(toggle)	<A>
Bold print On/Off	(toggle)	
Print to Printer/File	(toggle)	<T>
Cancel Print and Close Window		<C> or <Esc>
Open the Print Options Help Window		<H> or <Help>
Start Printing		<P> or <Return>

1.88 THE CONFIGURATION FILE

The configuration file is NOT required - it is provided for more advanced users who have specific requirements. If it is not found, the program default values will be used. The example file "bBase_default.prefs" contains the default values.

When bBase is first run, it looks in the S: directory for the presence of a file named "bBase.prefs". If it is found, the settings contained in it will be used. If it is not found, the default settings will be used. You can tell which settings are being used by checking the 4 colored pixels along the top of the Data area. These pixels will be a dark color if defaults are being used, or white if the configuration file settings are used. This file currently contains preferred values for the following:

- * The color palette
- * The top margin used for printed reports and mailing labels
- * The form-feed position
- * The text reader
- * The directory containing the documentation file(s)
- * The height of the bBase screen and window
- * Whether a full-width or narrower window is opened on the bBase screen
- * Whether or not to have Saves disabled
- * Whether or not to do a memory check when a database is loaded
- * The default column to start printing a single record

If you are altering a configuration file, the FORMAT must be precisely maintained. The commas are especially critical. bBase will check for an incorrect format, however, and if it does not appear to be correct, you will be informed, and the default values will be used.

The first line is simply a title.

Lines 2 through 9 contain the color values of the 8 bBase colors. Refer to Section 1.9 -

The Screen Colors
for information on changing these.

Line 10 specifies the top margin that will be used in printed reports. The number entered will be the number of 1/8 inches of the margin. EG, if a "5" is entered here, reports will be printed starting 5/8 inches

from the top of the page. If you enter a number here other than the default "0", you will also have to change the form-feed setting in order to get proper reports. (Refer to Section 7.5.3 -
Top Margin
).

Line 11 specifies the number of lines to print before a form-feed is generated. A "-1" means that form-feeds are suppressed. A "0" indicates that the default values will be used. Any other number (1-999) means that form-feeds will occur after the specified number of lines have been printed. (Refer to Section 7.5.4 -
Form-feeds
).

Line 12 is where you can specify your preferred text reader, which will be run when the <Help> key is pressed.

Line 13 is where you can specify the directory containing the bBaseIII documentation. If something is entered here, it must end in either a colon (:) or a slash (/). EG. DH0:Documentation/
If this is left blank, the doc file must be in the current directory in order for it to be found.

Line 14 specifies the height of the bBase screen and window. The default is 400 pixels, however some PAL users may want to enter 512 here.

Line 15 determines the width of the bBase window.
Make it 0 (full width) or 1 (slightly narrower).

Line 16 determines whether or not Saves are disabled.
Make it 0 (Saves enabled) or 1 (Saves disabled).

Line 17 determines whether or not a memory check will be made each time a database is loaded. Make it 0 (No check) or 1 (Make check).

Line 18 indicates the DEFAULT column at which printing will start when you are printing a single record (<F8>), but may be changed at the time of printing.

Lines 19 and 20 are used for error checking.

The rest of the file is only for your information.

1.89 EXAMPLE DATABASES

There are two example databases included in this package. The ↵
file

"Recipes.bbase" is a sample database showing one way of keeping track of recipes, without having to re-type them all. It merely shows where they can be found when needed. With this database you can sort the recipes by Name, Category, or anything else. You can search for all recipes containing a listed ingredient, recipes you have already served to given

people, or just the location of the recipe if you have forgotten which of your 647 recipe books it is in. I have found this to be very useful.

Address databases have their own unique problem. Most people prefer to sort this database on the Last Name of the person on record. This necessitates having separate fields for the Last Name and the First Names, or using one field with an entries such as "Smith, John", and "Smith, Mary". Unfortunately, when you want to print this record to a mailing label or envelope, it does not look too good.

My preferred method of getting around this is shown in the database "Addresses.bbase". The first field is the sorting field, in the format of "Smith, John". The sixth field holds the Mailing Name, which can include a formal salutation, eg. Mrs., Doctor, Captain, etc.

Now, when you want to print this record, just exchange the positions (Refer to Section 7.4.2 -

```
Swap Position of 2 Fields
) of fields 1 and 6,
```

and it will print the way you want it. After printing, you can just swap them back, or quit bBase without saving the change.

This example database also shows another useful method of tagging some records for a particular purpose. I use a database similar to this example to store the addresses of friends, family, neighbours and acquaintances. I was going to open a separate database for my Christmas card list, but then thought it would be more efficient to use the same one, since all of the recipients were in that database.

So, somewhere in the record of the Christmas card recipients, I added a distinctive word - in this case "xmas". Now, come December, I open this database, search for "xmas", and all of these records become tagged. I then go to the Print Options Window, select "Print Tagged Records" and "Mailing Label", then click on "Print", and my card list is printed on labels. The labels then serve as my hard-copy card list, and as I write the cards, I stick the label on the envelope rather than having to address the envelopes by hand.

The example shows the word "xmas" in the first field, but if the Notes option is being used, it would probably be neater to stick the word somewhere in the Notes, and use the "Search Notes" menu item to tag the desired records.

1.90 THE COMPETITION

I have put literally thousands of hours of work into bBase, and I am quite proud of the result. For various reasons, though, there are limitations in the program, (primarily the number of fields and the number of records), which may make it unsuitable for some purposes.

There are other fine non-commercial database programs available, and I would encourage you to try them and compare. I have looked at most of

them, and frankly, I prefer bBase, (could I possibly be biased?). But, some may have features that bBase does not have, which could make them more suitable for you.

Following is a list of the programs I have noticed. Most of them are in the Fred Fish collection, and so are readily available.

DataEasy	- Fred Fish 526	WBase	- Fred Fish 653
DataFiler	- Fred Fish 721	VCRFiler	- Fred Fish 721
AmigaBase	- Fred Fish 792	ProData	- Amiga Format Coverdisk Feb 93
Addresser	- Fred Fish 767	AMaster	- Fred Fish 827
Quickfile	- Fred Fish 919		

1.91 A NOTE ON ERROR MESSAGES

Listed below are a some of the error messages that could be encountered while using bBase, and their probable cause.

- * "Insufficient memory". This is pretty self-explanatory - bBase is requesting more memory than is available. Free memory can be increased by deleting items from the T: directory, or quitting other background programs (perhaps a memory cache program?).
- * "DEVICE UNAVAILABLE!" Every time I have received this message, it was due to trying to open a window (Show All Records, Show Tagged Records, View Notes, or even About), when the system had insufficient Chip RAM to do so. Closing the windows of other running programs might help.
- * "CAN'T FIND PRINTER DRIVER!". There were five reported cases of this error occurring in bBaseII. All were from England, and all occurred when trying to print a database. The error was caused by independent companies putting bBase on a self-booting disk that contained a Release 1.x "devs/system-configuration" file which assumed a printer driver that was not available.

To prevent the error:

- a) Copy the "system-configuration" file from your normal boot disk to the bBaseIII self-booting disk, or,
- b) Examine the "system-configuration" file on the bBaseIII disk to determine what driver it is looking for, and ensure that driver is located in your "devs/printers" directory.

1.92 IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM!

If you find that either the Demo or Registered versions of bBase do not perform according to the information found in this documentation, please let me know. This is your program - you paid for it, and it should work for you.

Descriptions of problems are difficult, at best. To assure a satisfactory solution to your problem, please do the following:

1. Re-read this documentation. The answer could be right here. If not ...
2. Copy your version of bBase onto a disk, along with a copy of one of the databases that you are having trouble with, and mail it to me, along with a detailed description of the problem, and the steps you must take to make the problem recur. This will accomplish two things. First, it will confirm that this is your legitimate, unaltered copy, (referring, of course, to Registered versions), and second, with the problem right in front of me, I will almost certainly be able to ascertain, and perhaps correct, the problem. In any case, I will naturally return your disk, hopefully with the problem corrected.
3. Include in your letter a brief description of your computer system, ie. Amiga model, Workbench version, amount of memory (Chip and Fast), accelerators (if any), etc. This information will be very useful in trouble-shooting.

Thank you for your interest in bBaseIII. If you have any comments or suggestions regarding this program, I would be pleased to hear from you. All correspondence will be answered.

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_ /_/ /_/ /_/ _

Email to: (usually reliable)
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