1.0 Some Answers About Immortality

1.1 Who needs Immortality?

1.1.1 Anyone who is a heavy user of desk accessories that need to be open when using several applications. Immortality automatically calls up a selected desk accessory each time a new application is launched, just as though you'd selected it from the Apple menu. Immortality was originally conceived as an addition to Thunder!, a spelling checker desk accessory from Batteries Included. As I was beta testing Thunder!, I found that I'd often enter an application and forget to turn Thunder! on. Then, some time into the document I was preparing, I'd depend on Thunder! to correct a mistake, only to realize that it wasn't there. I'd be forced to break my momentum to activate it.

1.2 What else is there?

1.2.1 In addition to automatically launching desk accessories, Immortality will also reserve memory for the accessory before the application has a chance to grab it. This is useful because some applications (notably Filemaker+) appropriate nearly all available memory as soon as they start up. Though they'll run fine with less, they simply don't leave enough for large desk accessories like Thunder! to run. Thus, large desk accessories might run under Immortality that aren't otherwise available in ill–behaved applications.

1.3 How did Immortality happen?

1.3.1 Immortality started as a joke. While lurking on the MAUG Macintosh Users' Forum on CompuServe I mentioned in jest that I was patching my system to keep Thunder! from vanishing at each launch. Apparently I failed to convey the humorous intent of the remark, and was besieged by requests from mighty Thunderers for copies of my patch. Being the sort of fool that can't resist a cheering audience (and Linda Kaplan's "pretty please") I cooked up Immortality. My thanks (in no particular order) therefore go out to Linda, Evan Gross (author of Thunder!), Steve Bobker, Bill Steinberg, Rob Hahn, and Harry Conover for taking me entirely too seriously.

1.4 Why is Immortality free?

1.4.1 Shortly after I unveiled an early test version of Immortality I received a number of requests for features and enhancements, some of which are incorporated into this version. Unfortunately, even though I possess the Secret of Immortality I still must eat. Much as I'd love to add enough to Immortality to make it a commercial quality product I cannot now afford to do so, as there's little chance it could carry its own freight as shareware. If a commercial publisher should choose to include it on a utility disk I'd be willing to negotiate very favourable terms for the enhanced version, but at this point I don't even have the time to actively seek out such a publisher. Until such time as this situation is rectified the features will just have to wait.

I will take this opportunity, though, to advertise. I currently market two main products for the Macintosh, with a host of others to be released over the next few months. The first is BackDown, a desk accessory that performs the tedious task of Xmodem downloading in the background, allowing you to use your Macintosh normally while those interminable downloads are being taken care of invisibly. The other Macintosh product I sell is myself. Yes, I'm one of those immoral sorts that stands around on high–tech streetcorners, swinging diskette cases and selling myself to the highest bidder. I do great work, though, so if you've got serious system–level Macintosh programming tasks drop me some Email. Help save this soul from stooping to the depths of MS-DOS programming.

2.0 **Acheiving Immortality**

2.1   Installing Immortality couldn't be easier. Just drag the file named "Immortality" into the system folder on your startup disk. This will make Thunder! immortal assuming, of course, that you've got Thunder! installed on the system you're using. Note that Immortality need only be on your original startup disk. If you switch disks, use a RamDisk or a hard disk that boots from floppy, you don't need Immortality on those disks.

If you wish to make other accessories immortal, see the section on Customizing Immortality, below.

3.0 **Using Immortality**

3.1   Consorting with mortals (defeating Immortality for one launch)

3.1.1 Some applications might have problems running with Immortality, either because they are incompatible with the desk accessories that Immortality is trying to run or because they are simply incompatible with Immortality itself. You can temporarily suspend Immortality for one such applications by holding down the shift key when you launch the application. The Finder won't let you double–click with the shift key down, so launch first, the quickly shift until the application's menu bar is fully drawn.

If you find an application that works okay with a desk accessory but not with Immortality, please bring it to my attention. I can't fix 'em if I don't know about 'em.

It's useful to note that Immortality simply re–starts the accessory each time you launch. You can still quit any immortal accessory in the normal way and it won't re–appear until the next launch.

3.2   Existential Mode (defeating Immortality for an entire session)

3.2.1 If you're starting your Macintosh for some activity which won't require Immortality, you can defeat it by holding down the shift key during boot. The resulting system should run as though Immortality weren't installed at all. Formerly immortal desk accessories can now be used as they were before they became immortal.

3.3   Ephemeral Mode (de-installing Immortality)

3.3.1 Occasionally, I'm told, folks tire of Immortality and desire to return permanently to their former, ephemeral existence. This, too, is easily achieved. Simply drag Immortality out of the system folder (on HFS systems) or into the trash (after making sure you have a backup!) and your desk accessories will revert to their previous, mortal state.

4.0 **Customizing Immortality**

  4.1   Changing the immortal accessory

    4.1.1   In order to change the accessory that is immortalized by
            Immortality, it is necessary to use Apple's resource editor program
            ResEdit. A tutorial on ResEdit is beyond the scope of this project, but
            it's pretty straightforward; you pretty much just double–click on what
            you want to open, then edit it in the standard Macintosh fashion. Just
            be sure you use ResEdit only with disks that have been thoroughly
            backed up.

    Open the Immortality file using ResEdit, and open the STR resources. There
            is one string resource (#133) in Immortality; open it. There,
            displayed before your eyes, is the name of the desk accessory that
            Immortality opens. Change it to the name of whatever accessory you
            wish to immortalize. A word of warning, though. There is a hidden
            character at the beginning of most desk accessory names. If your
            accessories were installed by Apple's Font/DA Mover program, and
            you take care not to drag the cursor off the left side of the edit
            window when you're editing the name, you shouldn't have any
            problems. If, on the other hand, Immortality seems to install properly
            (you get the Immortality window when booting) but doesn't ever
            bring up the desk accessory, you've probably erased the invisible
            character. For now, just get another copy of your Immortality backup
            (you DID back up before you started, right?) and try again. Future
            versions of this documentation just might detail how to fix this
            problem using ResEdit's default picker.

  4.2   Changing the reserved memory size

    4.2.1   Another resource available for modification is the RESV resource. It
            controls how much memory Immortality reserves for the Immortal
            desk accessory. If you open the RESV resource you'll get the
            standard ResEdit picker edit window. RESV is currently configured to
            reserve about 150 Kbytes, the approximate size of Thunder!. This
            should be sufficient for most desk accessories. Note that this
            memory is not lost to the application; if you close the immortal DA or
            skip it with the shift key, the application gets as much memory as it
            would have without Immortality installed. RESV is simply there to try
            to outwit ill–behaved memory hogging applications.

4.3 Having more than one immortal accessory

4.3.1 If you wish to make more than one desk accessory immortal, simply make as many copies of the Immortality file as you need, naming each one something clever like Immort#1, Immort#2. Or, better yet, call them Immortal Thunder, Immortal Alarm Clock, etc. Then use ResEdit to change the immortal desk accessory name in each file.

5.0 **Reporting Immortal Bugs**

5.1   If you have problems with Immortality please let me know. Be sure to tell me what desk accessories you're immortalizing, which application you're having trouble with, where you got your copy of Immortality, what the symptoms are, and how the application responds to the desk accessory if you run it independently of Immortality.