

Y2K Patch for Church Database Program

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Introduction

The Y2K problem involves date fields based on entry of only the last two digits of the year, as in 11/9/44 (rather than 11/9/1944). The problem is that programs will not be able to distinguish 1900 from 2000 from the last two digits, and calculations such as age will be ambiguous. FoxPro provides an internal date format that will behave correctly, but the Church program does not typically use this format in order to support partial date information.

Fixing this problem requires adding four-digit date fields for those dates which require it (birth dates, anniversaries, membership dates, visitation dates, etc.). The extra two digits must be added both to the data entry screens and all reports which refer to the fields. Calculations based on these dates (notably age) must also be modified.

Finally, the data files which store the affected dates must be modified to store the two additional digits, and all existing data must be updated by adding "19" to the first two digits of the year. The data files modified are:

- Membership Data (MEMSHIP.DBF)
- Prospect Data (PROSPECT.DBF)
- Former Member Data (MEMFORMR.DBF)
- Visitation Record Data (MEMVISIT.DBF, MEMVISIT.FPT, PROVISIT.DBF, PROVISIT.FMT)
- Any currently created People Files (PEOPLE1.DBF through PEOPLE9.DBF, PEOPLEX.DBF)

Because of the extensive changes required, this was considered an appropriate point to add Area Code fields to all telephone numbers as well. Since more and more churches are ministering to communities with more than one Area Code, it seemed appropriate to provide for this new trend.

This patch will automatically convert the above-named files to the new format when it is run for the first time. This conversion results in the version number of your Church Database installation being updated to Version 3. The version

number is displayed in the lower left-hand corner of the initial Church menu screen (seen when you first start the program).

Installation

The program logic of the Church Database Program is contained in the single file CHURCH.APP, normally located in your C:\CHURCH directory. To install the patch:

1. Make a backup copy of your current CHURCH.APP file. It is a good idea to make a complete backup of your entire C:\CHURCH directory at this time, just in case a major problem develops.
2. Download the file CHURCH.EXE from The Sunday School Page web site (<http://sschool.com/content/software.htm>).
3. Run the CHURCH.EXE program to copy the new CHURCH.APP into your program directory (normally C:\CHURCH).
4. Run the CHURCH program as you normally do. On startup, the program will detect the current version of your program files and update them to the latest version (Version 3).
5. The updating process will create a new directory named BACKUP under your CHURCH directory. It will place copies of the original version of each original database file that it changes in this BACKUP directory. [After you determine that your new installation is working correctly, you should remove these backup files.]
6. *In the event of problems*, should you need to revert to your previous program version, restore your original copy of your CHURCH.APP file (from step 1) and copy all the files in the new BACKUP directory into the CHURCH directory. This will restore your system to its previous state.

The conversion process will prepend "19" to all affected dates, and you will see four-digit years on the data entry screens associated with them. Take a quick look at the Membership->Administer screens to familiarize yourself with the new formats. All affected dates entered from this point forward will require four-digit year entry.

The conversion will also extend all telephone numbers to ten digits, with the first three (the Area Code) initially blank.

Explanation

Not all dates were converted to four-digit years. Some dates have a built-in context, from which the correct century is obvious. This is true of Sunday School attendance reports, for instance: attendance sheets are completed on a particular (known) Sunday, and reports are listed for a particular year (in sequence). The same is true of contribution records. To minimize risk, no change was made for the dates associated with these program areas.

The dates that were converted have no immediate context to determine the century, or were involved in calculations that require knowing the century. For instance, the date on which a visit occurred is used in calculations of weeks since the last visit; birth dates are used to calculate ages; and anniversary dates have no other context to help determine the century.

Fitting the additional two characters for dates and four characters for telephone numbers into already-crowded reports was not a simple task. A variety of approaches were taken with reports. Some required removing the FUN-SUB numbers, which typically are not useful to most readers. Others seemed to have enough space to simply add the new information.

If you really need a listing including the FUN-SUB numbers for administrative purposes, the "mini-master" report from the Membership->Print menu will provide this information (as well as other reports).

Troubleshooting

I need your help in testing this program!

There were extensive changes to the Church Database program involved in this patch. I have attempted to test as much as possible, but have not been able to try every report. In addition, there are many printers supported by the program to which I have no current access (including laser printers)

I have tested the Sunday School attendance functionality and am confident that it should continue to work properly. There may be other areas used by some churches that I have overlooked.

Please feel free to contact me with any problems you find. As always, I can only promise a best-effort attempt to correct problems in a reasonable time frame.

Trouble Reporting

The best way to report a problem is to complete the form on the problem report page provided on The Sunday School Page at <http://sschool.com/software/MR.htm>. Any supporting material (such as printouts of reports) can be Faxed to me at the number listed below. You can also send email to tjcook@earthlink.net. Please include:

1. The version number of your program (from the lower left-hand corner of the initial menu)
2. A full description of the problem you are experiencing
3. A description of the behavior you expect from the program
4. Contact information including your name, your church, and a telephone number if appropriate.
5. Please save copies of any reports in case I need to ask you to Fax or mail them to me.

Contact information for Thomas J. Cook:

Email: tjcook@earthlink.net

FAX: (707) 922-8447

Daytime Telephone: 614-860-4409

Web Page: The Sunday School Page, <http://sschool.com>