

Make a Merge File Look and Feel Like a Database
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Did you know that WordPerfect has a built-in database feature? No, I'm not talking about DataPerfect or even Borland's Paradox in the new PerfectOffice suite. WordPerfect can create and manage a simple database using WordPerfect's Merge feature.

While WordPerfect's Merge feature normally requires you to deal with secondary merge files, you can easily give this feature the look and feel of a real database (see Figure 1 below). The included DB.WPM macro lets you create and manage data. With the macro, you can add or delete a record, edit the previous or next record or go to the first or last record in the database.

Using the Macro

To use the macro, retrieve your secondary file and make sure you've used field names. (See sample file in Figure 2 below.) If you haven't named the fields, this macro won't work.

If you want to create a new secondary file, go to a clear screen and press Merge Codes (Shift-F9) twice. Type field names and press (Enter). Type the name of the field, like Name, and press (Enter). Enter as many field names as you need (up to 23). When you're done, press (Enter) after the last field name prompt.

To run the macro, with your secondary file on the screen press Macro (Alt-F10), type "db" and press (Enter). The Quick Data Entry screen appears, similar to Figure 1. If your cursor was in a specific record, the field names are followed by the data from that field.

You can press (Page Up) or (Page Down) to move through the records. If you want to move to the beginning of the secondary file, press (Home). To move to the end of the file, press (End). To delete the record that's currently displayed in the Quick Data Entry screen, press (Ctrl-Delete).

If you want to add a new record, press (Insert). You can easily modify the current record or add data to a new record by pressing the letter for any field, such as A for the first field, B for the second field and so forth. When you're finished adding or modifying fields in this record, press Save (F10) to update the record and return to the main macro screen. When you've finished modifying the secondary file, press Quit (F7). Save the secondary file and clear the screen. You're now ready to run the merge.

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Quick Data Entry      Record: 1
A Emp. Number   : 54312
B Phone        : (815) 783-1276
C SSN          : 312-55-7484
D Hire Date    : 10/10/78
E Position     : Manager
F Salary Grade : 19

PgUp/PgDn Home/End Browse; Ins Add; Ctrl-Del Delete; F7 Quit

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Figure 1

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{FIELD NAMES}Emp. Number~Phone~SSN~Hire Date~Position~Salary Grade~~{END RECORD}
=====
54312{END FIELD}
(815) 783-1276{END FIELD}
312-55-7484{END FIELD}
10/10/78{END FIELD}
Manager{END FIELD}
19{END FIELD}
{END RECORD}
=====
54399{END FIELD}
(312) 658-3614{END FIELD}
847-37-3712{END FIELD}
01/19/88{END FIELD}
Technician{END FIELD}
15{END FIELD}
{END RECORD}
=====

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Figure 2

Understanding the Macro

Line 1 turns the display off, and line 2 turns off Reveal Codes.

Line 3 initializes variable HighLen (used later to determine the longest field name) and stores the current record number in variable Pg.

Line 4 moves the cursor to the first record in your secondary file and initializes variable Field# with a value of 1. Lines 5-9 check to make sure the secondary file contains field names. Lines 10-19 contain a while loop that gathers the field name information found in the very first record of your secondary file. Line 20 returns your cursor to the original record you started from.

Line 23 calls the ReadData subroutine beginning on line 66. Lines 66-74 gather the information from each field of the current record. Lines 70-73 contain the FOR loop that actually assigns the field information to variables. Line 74 returns macro execution to the end of line 23, where the cursor is placed at the top of the current record.

Lines 24-35 display the Quick Data Entry screen. The for loop in lines 26-33 displays each field name followed by the field information. Lines 34 and 35 display the menu at the bottom of the Quick Data Entry screen.

Lines 36-45 check to see what key was pressed, then perform the appropriate action.

Lines 46-59 contain an amazing while loop that checks to see what letter key you pressed, converts it to a number, then positions your cursor to edit that field number. Lines 56-57 display a new menu at the bottom of the screen. Line 58 checks to see if you pressed the Save (F10) key. If you did, the macro breaks out of the {while} loop and continues on.

Lines 60-63 delete the old record and replace it with the new data. Line 64 adds the End Record code and returns to line 22 where the record is read in again, and the Quick Date Entry screen is re-created.