

MacCheckout

Documentation

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(Note: Any problems or questions regarding MacCheckout can be sent to the above e-mail address and are usually responded to within 24 hrs. Be sure to include: a return e-mail address, a day time phone number and the name of a contact person. Include a detailed description of the problem or question. Similarly, if you have a feature request, send it to the above e-mail address along with a return e-mail address, a day time phone number and the name of a contact person, in case there needs to be a follow up question.)

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Introduction

Welcome to MacCheckout.

MacCheckout is an equipment inventory, reservation and checkout system. It is designed to enable users to maintain their inventory of equipment and coordinate users access to that equipment via reservation and checkout functions.

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What is included

The MacCheckout Software includes 1 diskette, this documentation and a separate 'Users Guide' which can be used for training. The diskette contains the MacCheckout application and an on line Help file.

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What is covered in the Documentation

A complete description of the software. This includes advice on how to set it up to meet your needs and how to operate the software.

The application software will be referred to as the 'System' from now on. Any reference to the 'Operating System' refers to the version of Apple's System Software you are currently using.

A specific point or further explanation is noted using '*Note:*'.

'User' is used to denote someone who is using the 'launched' system.

'System Operator' is used to denote someone who has the knowledge to alter the system settings or data.

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Operating System and Hardware requirements

To successfully use this software, it requires any Macintosh that can run System 6.07 or later and has a screen display of at least 640 x 480 pixels. (Items will be cropped on a screen smaller than this). The software is memory based so it will use as much memory as you want to assign to it. It comes preset with a 4 mb default partition. (*Note:* The default partition for the PPC version is 8mb without virtual memory running.) This should prove more than adequate to operate between 3 - 4000 people and 1000 equipment records in real time (plus all the reservation requests and other associated data that goes with those records). If you expect your database to increase past this limit, assign more memory as needed.

(*Note:* In the event the system cannot complete a task due to a memory limitation, you are warned and the current task is aborted. In the event this should happen, you should quit the program and assign more memory to the application before re-launching it. The Macintosh Users Guide that comes with your computer explains how to do this.)

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Installing the Software on your hard disk

- a/ Create a backup of the floppy disk supplied
- b/ Create a folder on your hard disk called 'MacCheckout'
- c/ Copy the Application Software and help file from the disk to the folder

You are now ready to launch and initialize your software.

- d/ Launch the application. (Enter your name, organization and serial number, if needed. The serial number can be found on the disk supplied.)

(Note: When the software runs for the first time it has to create eight (8) files and four (4) folders. These files are placed in the same folder as the application and are used to store any data entered. These files MUST ALWAYS be in the same folder as the application. If any of these files are missing during launch then the application automatically recreates them. You are warned that the application is going to create these files and are given the opportunity to 'Quit' at that point.

The names of the files are as follows:

- MacCheckout.Agree
- MacCheckout.Class
- MacCheckout.Equipment
- MacCheckout.Fines
- MacCheckout.Override
- MacCheckout.People
- MacCheckout.Pref
- MacCheckout.Schedule

The names of the folders are as follows:

- MacCheckout->EImages
- MacCheckout->PImages
- MacCheckout->Repair
- MacCheckout->Resale

Similarly the software will use any files that have these names as though they were its own. This can cause unforeseen consequences if the data in those files are NOT in the correct format.)

The file *MacCheckout.UsageLogs* and the folder *MacCheckout->Invoices* will also be created, if you use certain functions.

When the system is finished creating the files and loading the global variables, you will have to do one more thing.

You must initialize the format that you want to use for people ID numbers.

You will be presented with this dialog.

You must choose between the options provided. Currently you are given the choice of using a seven (7) digit number, the persons Social Security number (National Insurance number in the U.K.) or an other specified length of numerical ID number.

Select the format you want to use for people ID numbers:

7 Digit number id
e.g. 0000000

Social Security Number (US)
e.g. 000-00-0000

National Insurance Number (UK)
e.g. AA 00 00 00A

Other Number ID length: -->
e.g. 000000000000 (Max 20)

User Requested Formats

List items:
@ - denotes any letter
A/Z - denotes actual letter

Note: Once set this CANNOT be changed.
(Currently MacCheckout only supports these formats. Current users only use these. More can be added if requested.)

OK Quit the program

'User Requested Formats' gives you access to this dialog. These are formats that have been requested by other users, which you can choose from, if they meet your needs.

(*Note:* Others can be added if you require a different format. Just e-mail the requirements to the address on the second page.)

Select your ID format:

000000-0
000000 - 0
@000000000000@
A0000000000000@
@000000000
P000000000
@@0000000
PR0000000

OK Cancel

Once you make your choice and click 'OK', you cannot change this. The only way to re-initialize this is to 'Quit' the application and then delete both the '.Pref' and '.People' files. When you open the application again you will be asked if it is all right to create these two files. You will then be presented with the above dialog again. You will only be asked to set this once and that will be the format you use while the system is in operation.

You are all set to start using the software.

(*Note:* The software also creates other files that it uses if you access certain functions:

'Resale' creates a resale file for each month you use it. The naming format for this file is 'Resale->Month,Year' e.g. 'Resale->Aug,2003'. A new one is automatically created each month and is a text file that can be read by any other application.

'Repair' works in the same way with a naming format of 'Repair->Month,Year' e.g. 'Repair->Aug,2003'. These files are automatically created and overwrite or append the data to any file of that type currently in existence without warning. Both **'Resale'** and **'Repair'** store the files in the appropriate folders on the hard disk.)

(*Note:* To prevent accidental loss of data due to these files being created, it is recommended that the software is placed in its own folder. This allows the software to operate without interfering with other applications.)

Theory of Operation

The system has two modes of operations, 'Unlaunched' and 'Launched'.

Unlaunched

In this mode there are no restrictions on what the system operator can do. The system operator can add, edit or delete any data in the system. Global system restrictions and limits can be set or removed and the system can be customized to a particular departments needs. Only people with sufficient training should have access to this level.

Launched

In this mode the system attributes and data are protected from the user and cannot be accessed unless the user has the correct security access. There are 5 levels of security built into the system ranging from 'Open' to 'Password'. 'Open' implies NO restrictions and 'Password' requires the user to enter the current system password to access the function. All functions that can have their access assigned are programmable from the 'unlaunched' system.

(Note: If something is assigned a 'Password' access and NO password is currently installed in the system, then the access is treated as 'Open'.)

(Note: This document covers the 'Unlaunched' system. Please refer to the 'Users Guide' for information concerning the 'Launched' system. Both documents cover items that they have in common, e.g. Certain items on the 'Functions' menu.)

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General System Information

The system differs from a regular Macintosh application in several ways and several liberties have been taken (for one reason or another) with the usual Macintosh application interface.

The system has been designed to fulfill a mission specific task, in that relatively untrained people are going to have to use it, that the system has to perform in a near real-time environment, that data entry must be kept to a minimum, and that the data must be protected as much as possible from the users. In this regard the following items are consistent throughout the system:

The **window** is of a fixed size and cannot be changed (640 x 480 pixels). (*It was found that scrolling a window was just too awkward and slow for beginning users.*)

There is **NO cut and paste** support except in dialogs. (*The reason for this is obvious once you use the system, there is NO direct user access to the data.*)

There is **NO undo**, after a task has been completed. Any result of that task can be removed. (A reservation can be deleted, there is no undo in regards to the standard Macintosh definition of that function however.)

All basic functions like **Save and Print are supported by on screen buttons** at the bottom of the screen.

It is **possible to disable the 'Apple' menu** to prevent users getting into the Finder.

Scrolling dialog lists allow you to do several things. You can type the first few letters of an appropriate item to highlight it. You can double click on an item to select it and if you select an item while you hold the 'Option' key down you will be given the option to delete it (where applicable).

Two other keys are supported:

Holding the 'Shift' key down allows for selection of multiple contiguous items. Holding the 'Command' key down allows for the selection of multiple non-contiguous items. (Both are supported where applicable.)

With the exceptions of entering a user ID number, user initials or a date currently not presented by the system, there is **NO user data entry required while the system is launched**.

The system allows you to enter certain dates that act as limits, e.g. 'End of Active period'. These dates are included in the limit, e.g. 8/15/03 as an 'End of Active period' would mean that people could reserve and checkout equipment up to and including that date. This is consistent throughout the system.

Due to the fact that the 'Launched' system has to function in a near real time environment, most of the time consuming functions like 'Inventory' are not available. However, one of the slowest parts of the system, Printing, is always available. Due to the fact that you loose control of the CPU while the application either prints directly to the printer, or spools the data to the hard disk to be printed later, the print routine checks how much you have to print when the 'Print' command is selected. If there are more than five (5) pages to print, the system asks you to confirm that you actually want to print the data at the current time. This allows you to abort long printing delays, if you are busy at the current time.