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LSG Hours for the Holidays

Be sure to check your forms stock and order before Dec. 15th if you think you will need them in early January.



We will be closed for the **Thanksgiving Holiday** November 25th and 26th, 2004.

We will be closed for the **Christmas & New Year Holiday** starting Noon on December 24th, and will reopen at 8 A.M., January 3rd, 2005.

Because the office will be closed during that time, paper and other products will not be shipped and only "emergency support" will be offered. **Please remember that "emergency support" is not covered under any pre-paid phone plans and is available by credit card only.** (Visa and Mastercard only.) ■

Important Year-End Procedures

The end of the year is nearly upon us and that means it will soon be time to reset year to date totals to zero. **The time to perform this function is in January (after you have closed December, but before closing January).** The following describes how;

DOS Users: Start at the Main Menu and select 3 for Maintenance Menu. Next, select 3 to "Reset YTD totals to 0." Finally, answer "Y" to set the totals to zero.

Lab Manager for Windows Users: Start at the Main Menu and click on "Utility Menu." At the Utility Menu, click on "Year End." Finally, click on "Reset Year to Date Totals." ■

Dec 2004

Connections

Happy Holidays from all of us at LSG!

The Newsletter for Lab Manager Users



Happy Holidays from all of us at LSG! We are very excited about Version 6's progress. It is just around the corner. Look for great things in 2005 (see pages 2 and 3 for Info).

Getting the Most Speed Out of Lab Manager 2000 (Version 5)

Under most circumstances, the current version of Lab Manager 2000 for Windows (Version 5) runs very fast. Even in very large dental laboratories, with 75 or more technicians, Version 5 is up to the challenge. There are things, however, that can make Version 5 operate slower than it should. This article discusses the most common problems that can slow Version 5 down.

System Memory Limits

Lab Manager 2000 (Version 5) will operate on a computer with as little as 32 Meg of RAM, however, it will operate much faster on a computer with more memory. **Version 5 operates at it's peak with about 256 Meg of RAM and will not operate at all on computers with more than 512 Meg of RAM.** Therefore, as a general rule, you should have between 256 and 512 Meg of RAM in your computer. Microsoft is aware of the problem and is working to correct it.

System Hard Drive

For the most part, the amount of hard drive space you have in your computer

will not affect the speed of Version 5 as long as the hard drive is defragmented from time to time. Another easy way to speed up Version 5 is to compact the Lab Manager data and program files. This is accomplished by closing down Lab Manager and starting up the Lab Manager **Utility** program. There, click on **Database Maintenance** and then click on **Repair Data** and when that is done, click on **Compact Data**. Repeat these two steps for the program files in the Program Maintenance Section on the screen.

Though not required, to get optimum performance you might want to repeat the above steps once every few months.

Networks

If you are using Lab Manager (Version 5) on a network, the speed of the network can have a HUGE affect on the speed of the program. To get optimum speed on a network, make sure that you are using a network running at 100Mbs or faster. 1,000Mbs networks are common place and inexpensive.

Ideally, the server should be a stand-alone computer with no one sitting at it using it. Also, make sure that you are using network switches and not hubs. A network hub looks just like a switch but is not as fast. It is the device that all of your network cables plug into. Hubs can only pass data from the server to the workstation one computer at a time, whereas a switch can pass the data through to multiple computers at the same time.

Use Network Attached Storage

We recently discovered that some Windows networks have problems with hard drive buffering or caching. This documented Windows problem causes the data going from a workstation to the server to be delayed. This can cause several problems when two or more people are entering cases at the same time.

The easiest solution is to purchase a **NAS** or **Network Attached Storage** device. A NAS device looks like a small box with a power cord and a network connection. Installation is simple. Set the box on a table, plug it into power, and plug a network cable into it. Once that is done, you can see the NAS hard drive from each of the workstations just as if it were another computer on the network (which in fact it is). Now you can copy your Lab Manager data to it and proceed to each

of the workstations and tell Lab Manager to attach to the data on the new NAS device and you are done. From that point on, the NAS device acts like a server without the Windows network bugs. The reason this works is because this NAS device doesn't use Windows at all. It looks just like a Windows computer to all of the other computers on the network and so accessing data on it is no different; just faster and more reliable.

Several companies make NAS devices, however, Tritton Technologies sells an 80GB device (model # TRI-NAS080) for only \$229.50 that we have successfully tested.

How to Speed Up Windows XP

The following describes how to make Lab Manager run faster in Windows XP. This does not apply to any other version of Windows.

1. Click on the **Start** button and then click on **Control Panel**.
2. Click on **Performance and Maintenance**. **NOTE:** If you can't see this selection, your computer might be set to **Classic View**. To change to **Category View**, click on **Switch to Category View** on the left.
3. Click on **Adjust Visual Effects**.
4. Click on the **Advanced** Tab.
5. Click on **Background services**, moving the dot next to it.
6. Click on **Apply** and close all of the windows you opened.

Restart your computer and it will operate Lab Manager many times faster.

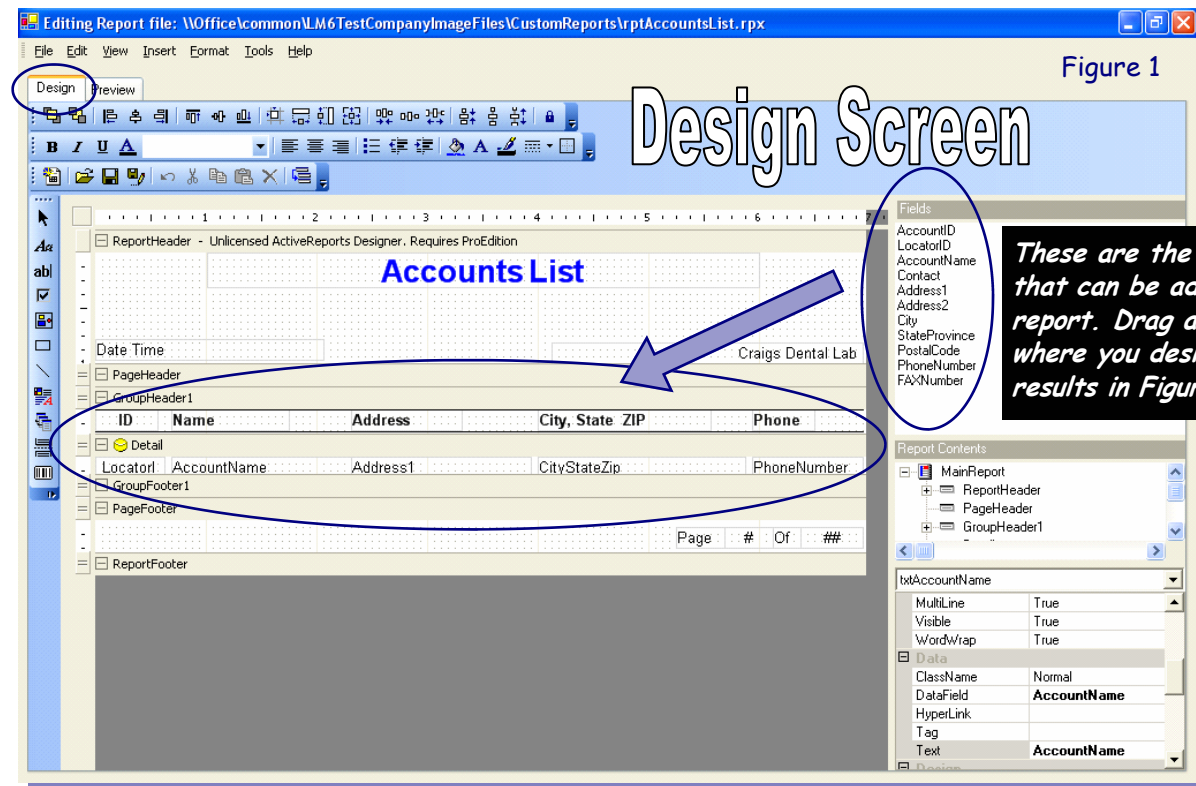
Hyper-Threading

Recently, the computer industry has introduced

another speed bump; it is called Hyper-Threading. For your computer to support Hyper-Threading, it must be 2Ghz or faster running Windows XP and the computer must be fairly new. In theory, Hyper-Threading can speed up some programs, however, Microsoft warns that many program will slow down or not operate at all with it enabled. Lab Manager is one of those programs that slows down with Hyper-Threading turned on. I find that fact amusing since Lab Manager is written with Microsoft's own Access programming environment.

Turning it off is often very easy, but it requires a call to the folks that sold you your computer because the process is different for each computer. It usually involves pressing a certain key on the keyboard right after you turn the computer on to get into the computer's BIOS. There, Hyper-Threading can be disabled. ■

Lab Manager Version 6 Update (Report Generator)

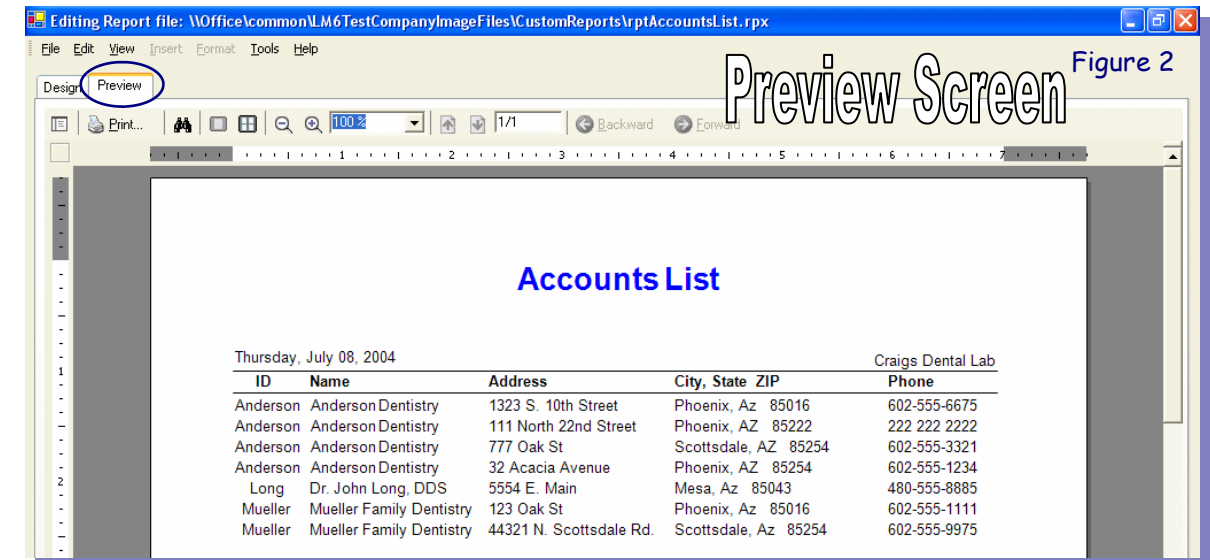


The screenshot shows the 'Design Screen' of the Lab Manager report generator. The title bar reads 'Editing Report file: \\Office\common\LM6TestCompany\imageFiles\CustomReports\vrpt\AccountsList.rpx'. The menu bar includes File, Edit, View, Insert, Format, Tools, and Help. The toolbar has icons for Design and Preview. The main workspace shows a report design for 'Accounts List' with a table structure. A text box on the right lists fields that can be added to the report: AccountID, LocatorID, AccountName, Contact, Address1, Address2, City, StateProvince, PostalCode, PhoneNumber, and FAXNumber. A callout box with an arrow pointing to the table header says: 'These are the fields that can be added to a report. Drag and drop where you desire. See results in Figure 2.' The table header includes columns for ID, Name, Address, City, State, ZIP, and Phone. The footer shows 'Page # Of ##'.

Version 6 is coming along very nicely. As you can see (**Figures 1 and 2**), it now has a report generator. **Figure 1** shows the design screen and **Figure 2** shows the Preview portion of the design screen.

Using simple drag and drop actions, you can move things around on the form and add new fields to the report. Font, size, color, graphics, lines, boxes, labels, and report data can all be added or changed allowing you to customize existing reports or create new ones.

Version 6 beta testing should start in early 2005. Watch our Connections Newsletter for updates. ■



The screenshot shows the 'Preview Screen' of the Lab Manager report generator. The title bar reads 'Editing Report file: \\Office\common\LM6TestCompany\imageFiles\CustomReports\vrpt\AccountsList.rpx'. The menu bar includes File, Edit, View, Insert, Format, Tools, and Help. The toolbar has icons for Print, Backward, and Forward. The main workspace shows a preview of the 'Accounts List' report. The report header includes the date 'Thursday, July 08, 2004' and the company name 'Craig's Dental Lab'. The table contains the following data:

ID	Name	Address	City, State	ZIP	Phone
Anderson	Anderson Dentistry	1323 S. 10th Street	Phoenix, Az	85016	602-555-6675
Anderson	Anderson Dentistry	111 North 22nd Street	Phoenix, AZ	85222	222 222 2222
Anderson	Anderson Dentistry	777 Oak St	Scottsdale, AZ	85254	602-555-3321
Anderson	Anderson Dentistry	32 Acacia Avenue	Phoenix, AZ	85254	602-555-1234
Long	Dr. John Long, DDS	5554 E. Main	Mesa, Az	85043	480-555-8885
Mueller	Mueller Family Dentistry	123 Oak St	Phoenix, Az	85016	602-555-1111
Mueller	Mueller Family Dentistry	44321 N. Scottsdale Rd.	Scottsdale, Az	85254	602-555-9975