HandyWork Newsletter

HandyWorks for Windows is Ready to Roll!

After over three years of development, Chapter 1 Software is proud to announce the release of HandyWorks for Windows. This new version of HandyWorks differs in many wonderful ways from its DOS predecessor.

First of all, it is written in Microsoft Access and can be shipped with the code unlocked. This means that those of you who want to add or change how it works, could buy a full copy of Microsoft Access and examine the data yourself in ways that HWW programmers can only vaguely promise! And because Access programming is "relatively" easy, you'll be able to add reports and queries that we've never dreamed of.

What's New

On the feature side of the program is a richness of options that makes us all happy. Payments, visits and bills are all readily accessible and easily manipulated, and the ledger reflects all changes immediately. Visits can be shifted among bills, payments can be applied specifically to any detail or just to the oldest balance.

Click on a visit or payment date and its details, diagnosis and SOAP notes appear. If the visit's been paid, you can click a button and see where its payment came from. And if you're looking at a payment, you can see where the funds were distributed.

Aging

Aging is a true 30, 60, 90, 120 balance, with no need to ever do and End of Month again. Also, we've eliminated the need to run End of Day. Yes, there still is an End of Day form, but it is now called Day Stats. It lets you enter any date (or date range), and see what you did for that time period. We use it to print out daily reports and new patient letters.

Another useful accounting feature is that your Accounts receivable balances can be calculated, after the fact, for any desired date. And your doctor or insurance productivity can be looked at in many ways.

Billing

The billing options are also significantly enhanced through a billing wizard. You'll be able to bill and report in so many flavors that Baskin Robbins will be there for a sample! Thie wizard concept is carried over to Electronic claims, which makes it very easy to use.

Appointments

The appointment book lets you book ten rooms, and all of them are visible at one time. It's fast and easy!

It includes an easy to use multiple appointments wizard that lets you schedule any patient, repeatedly, over any span of time and combination of days.

Letters and Reports

You can't beat HWW for beautiful reports with more flexible criteria. HWW lets Windows do the printing dirty work, so reports can come out in swanky types on various printers. Your letters will look better, and you won't waste paper getting longer reports than you need. Also vastly improved is the letters module. Not only can you add as many custom letters as you wish, you can use "string substitutions" a.k.a. macros) to make each letter appear tailored to that patient.

What You Need

Our current recommended configuration to run HandyWorks for Windows is at least a 486/66. (That's a 486 processor running at 66 Mhz.) A Pentium is even better. Set aside a good bit of hard disk space, say 50 Meg to begin with. And don't plan on running HWW with less than 16 Meg of RAM.

As for a new computer, we think the best buy for the money would be a Pentium 100 or 166, with 32 Mb (or more) of RAM, a hard drive with at least 500 Mb and 10 millisecond or less access time. This system should run you around $2100 from big mail order companies, such as Dell or Gateway.

Conversion

Included as part of HWW is a conversion program that takes your HandyWorks DOS data and brings it into HWW. We used it to switch over to HWW in mid July and haven't looked back since. Our staff loves HWW and is very happy with its versatility and performance.

Cost

All of our HandyWorks users who are current on maintenance will be able to upgrade for only $200. Non users, or users who have not paid maintenance can purchase it for $1295. The Open Code upgrade is available for an additional $200.

DOS Upgrades - New and Improved

New Upgrade Policy: Many users are very happy with how their current systems are running. And often, we find that minor changes we make for some offices are not needed or wanted by others. For this reason, unless we issue a major upgrade, we will no longer automatically mail upgrades to everyone. Instead, we are instituting an "upgrade on demand" system that we hope will serve your needs better.

We list below the improvements made to HW over the last 6 months. If you need, or want these changes, call us and we will ship your upgrade to you immediately. If you are happy with the way things are, do nothing.

Computer Maintenance

We've seen, over the last year or two, a couple of problems with cross-linked files. This problem occurs when more than one file claims to own the same slice of disk space. Unfortunatley, no one knows how or why this occurs. But since this is a fairly common problem that can occur anytime and with any file in your computer, here is how we find and fix them on our system

From your C:, type CHKDSK followed by enter. The CHKDSK program will scan the FAT (File Attribute Table) for any errors. If any cross-linked files are found, they will be listed at the end of the screen report. What you'll do with this list is as follows. Copy each cross-linked file to a new (and unique) name. Then delete the original files. Finally, rename the newly copied files back to their original name.

CHKDSK may also report finding "Lost chains or allocation units". These are often snippets of information that have been deleted or rewritten. They are rarely of any value. So run CHKDSK /F (for fix) and answer no to the question, "Do you wish to recover these lost units?"

Vacation !!

The HandyWorks office will be closed the last week of August through Labor Day. Please save your problems till we return. As usual, we will be checking our answering machines for any emergencies.

Backup Horror!

In Backups We Trust

Dr. H. a longtime HandyWorks user (who practices in the charming state of MI) wanted to be up to date so he got a brand new computer. They had the computer people come out and install everything, including the transfer of data and programs from the old machine to the new.

The consultant set up a brand new tape backup program and instructed everyone on its use. Now this clinic is one of the finest around. The office manager, Mary, is a real stickler for details and watches everything like a hawk. We speak fairly frequently, typically about mundane topics such as Medicare changes and Electronic Billing.

However, about three months into the new system, the hard disk crashed! It just stopped working. But, fortunately, there were backups galore. No one was worried that disaster was about to strike.

Yes, you guessed it - the backup tapes were useless. They had never tested the new system to see if they could restore and now they were paying for it.

Eventually, they found an old backup from the system transfer. It took Mary a couple of weeks to get it all together again. And now, they make a point of checking their backups regularly.

What's the lesson for you? First, do backups regualry. Second, test your backups by trying to restore. Many computer people put in a menu backup command, but leave out restore. Make sure you know how to restore! Third, use different tapes or disks for different days of the week. And finally, if you have a problem, don't make a backup of it over an existing backup.

Electronic Claims

While many of you are using ETS (now called Equifax) for electronic claims, quite a few users are still mailing claims by hand. With electronic claims, you get immediate verification that your claim is received, turnaround times are diminished, typing errors on the carrier's end are eliminated, and you get paid faster! HandyWorks is designed to facilitate the submission process and we encourage all of you to try electronic billing. We think you will like it!

Some users employ an outside billing service to send their claims for them. They use a print capture program to catch the billing output, and this is then sent by the rebiller to the various carriers. But if you consider the costs, sending directly to Equifax eliminates the delay and gets you into the carriers within 24 hours. That's hard to beat!

If you want to try electronic billing, call Equifax at 800 535-4246, 800-690-6885 or 800-792-5252. Ask them to send you a new client application package. Your vendor is us - HandyWorks. You'll be glad you did!

Usefull Reports

The pre-billing report, found through F7 in ALT+7 is one of the most useful reports in HW. Why? Because it tells you what each patient has in unsubmitted claims. We run the report twice, first before we print bill, and then after. This gives us a birds eye view of our unsubmitted claims for all of our accounts.

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