HandyWork Newsletter

Sizable Forms

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The original form sizes for all of the HandyWorks windows was limited by the size of monitors that were available many years ago. And while many users now have much larger screens, some users have never gotten larger monitors and still have smaller monitors. This presented us with a problem because if we made the forms bigger, they would no longer fit on some user screens.

After a lot of work, we recently developed a work-around for the problem with re-sizable forms. You simply drag the edges and every-thing inside the form grows (or shrinks). The only form we have applied it to is the appointment book, and it seems to be working just fine.

Technically and behind the curtain, there is a lot of code to figure out proper proportions for the labels, controls and subforms. Note that opening a resizeable form is more complicated, so it takes more time and the screen often "flickers" during the process. We've done what we can to keep it pretty, hence "the please wait while your form loads" notice you see on the appointment book.

We are working on bringing this feature to other forms, which is relatively simple for all forms besides the transaction screen. Please let us know which forms you want to be larger and we will try to make that happen on the next update.

TeamViewer 14

As many of you know, when calling for tech support, we almost always ask you to run TeamViewer. This program is an essential tool for us as it lets us connect directly to your computer. We can see exactly what is on your screen on without having you try to explain it. This eliminates any chance of frustration for both of us.

By using Team Viewer, we can take over your mouse and keyboard, directly investigate and quickly solve your problem. Problems are solved faster, teaching is easier, and troubleshooting becomes a breeze.

Please make sure you are running TeamViewer 14. For convenience, if you need a copy, we post a link to TV-14 on the HandyWorks website.

Office 365?

The most recent version of MS Office, Office 365 comes with an automatic update function. Usually that's a good thing. However, a recent upgrade by MicroSoft broke the mouse scrollbar function. This has been well documented in the tech literature, and it affected all MS Access users, not just HandyWorker users.

We suggest you disable auto-matic updates for Office 365. This won't effect how Windows works or updates, but it will protect you from a non-functioning scrollbar.

Data Archiving

As time rolls by, data from a busy practice accumulates a large number of records, making your HWDATA very bloated. Believe it or not, some users have over 25 years of records with data files approaching a gigabyte!

Storing this much info is not necessary, and drags down system performance. So while you might feel reluctant to get rid of old data, there is actually a very safe way to preserve older records. It's called data archiving.

At the end of each year, we make a copy of the HWDATA file and save it under a new name with the year appended to the name, e.g. HWDATA2018. This file is our archive file and it has the entire data set as it existed at the end of 2018. Next, we open up HandyWorks and go to the Patient Data screen. There's a button on the bottom of the screen labeled Inactives. To delete patients who have not been in for 7 years, we put in a start date of 1/1/1980 and end date of 12/31/2011. We click the Trash Can to actually do the deletion. This removes patients who have not been in after 2011. To finish up the task, we need one more step, which is to compact-repair the HWDATA. See next page for instructions.

Should there ever be a reason that you need to find something that was deleted, simply reattach to your HWDATA2018, and all the older records can be viewed.

Calendar Slow?

Occasionally for some users, the calendar opens slowly and takes a lot of time to click on a patient's name. Even after many years of trying to make this happen on our test computers, we haven't been able to duplicate the problem. Even so, there is a very simple solution. It's called data repair, and you can now do this from within HandyWorks.

First, and perhaps most important, get all users (including yourself) out of the system and make a backup. This is just insurance in case there's a problem that can't be easily fixed. Then, go back into HandyWorks. From the Main Switchboard, go to the MenuBar at the top of your screen and click Add-Ins. Choose Utility on the far left, and the first item under Utility is Repair HWDATA. Click it. This will pop-up another screen with a Green Wrench on it. Click the Green Wrench to begin the repair.

Once the repair completes, HandyWorks will restart and you should find the Appointment Book works normally.

Nag, Nag, Nag

In the past, unless you checked our website, or tech support checked for you, you might not have known if there was a new update with enhanced features and other cool stuff. With our lasted versions in 2018, the program does the checking for you, everytime you start the program. And if there is a new update, you will see a gentle notice in the middle of your Main Switchboard. Click on the notice and HandyWorks will close and a browser window will open to our download page. Simply click the latest update to download it. And there is no need to worry about saved margin settings for your statements and insurance forms since the new Handyworks will automatically read in your saved settings.

What's New...

Have duplicate patients? Now you can merge them. Our "handy" routine lets you merge duplicate patients into one patient account, adding any duplicates as additional cases. All of your info is preserved and nothing is ever lost.

Did you ever want to print out the patient data screen? Older windows systems allowed you to do this, but newer versions broke this feature. So we added it back with an explicit option from the printer button, to print the screen.

Beware the Tech

Many users hire outside tech support to handle routine computer tasks. But this can go wrong if you are not careful. Most techies are good at their job, but very few of them understand the dynamics of relational shared databases.

There are some simple guidelines that your tech needs to follow when modifying your system. The most important thing to understand is that each computer workstation runs it's own copy of HandyWorks. This means that each computer workstation must have it's own copy of Microsoft Access. The data is what gets shared, not the program! If you try to share the program across your network, your program will malfunction.

Backup Issues

Occasionally, users move their data from one location to another. Sometimes its to the desktop, other times to a shared documents folder. Regardless of why the data location changed, the user needs to update their backup routine to specify the new location.

When backing up, be sure that no users have the program open. Only when the program closes are the data tables secured and locked for copying.

Backup Hints

Have more than one backup of your data. All too often, if there is a problem, you might be tempted to make a backup and in error over-write your only good backup. We backup EVERY DAY. What we do is have 5 folders on a flash drive. We call them Mon, Tue, Wed, Thur, Fri. On Monday, we backup to the Mon folder. Etc.

To make this easier, we have semi-automated the procedure by creating batch files called bu_mon, bu_tue, etc. The files live on your flash drive and inside of them is an instruction to copy the data from your \hww folder to the appropriate folder on the flash drive. If you need help in doing this correctly, call or email us. We will be glad to help you set this up.

If you don't want to bother with backing up yourself, many of our users run Carbonite, which is an internet based backup system. From our experience, Carbonite does a great job and should be considered if you find that backing up is hard to do.

Bye-Bye 800#

An odd thing started happening last year when we started getting robo fax calls to our 800#. We would get dozens of them a night, all from different numbers so they couldn't be blocked. Since we get charged per call and per minute on the 800#, it wasn't long before the costs of these faxes began adding up. We consulted with Verizon who offered no help, leaving us with no recourse but to drop our 800#.

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