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Introduction

Thank you for choosing the Activity Monitor. This program was designed and realized by a member of the Association of Shareware Professionals. For more information on the ASP, go to the Welcome section of this help file.

We try to make this product as functional and reliable as possible. If you experience difficulties using the Activity Monitor, or if you wish to see new features added to it, please send an E-mail message to Louis Desjardins, CIS #: 72202,3662

Copyright Notice

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This software can be duplicated and distributed, provided that all its files are copied and distributed in their original form, without any modification, and that no sum of money is asked in return, except to recover media and handling costs. Please see the Welcome section of this file for information on the licence agreement.

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Welcome to Activity Monitor

Thank you for choosing the Activity Monitor. This product is distributed as shareware. For more information on the shareware concept, please refer to the ASP section of this file.

If you are new to the Activity Monitor, please also take time to read the Licence section of this file.

What is the Activity Monitor?

The Activity Monitor is a utility designed to keep records of events that happened on your computer. It will record continuously the active program, and in some cases, the open data file. This will enable you to produce an activity report at a later time.

Activity Monitor will only record programs running under Windows 3.1x (including Windows for Workgroups), and DOS programs running in a window. It will fail to record most full screen DOS programs even when they are launched from Windows, as well as DOS TSR programs, unless there is a PIF file to provide information about them.

You can set the surveillance module up in such a way that it does not clutter your screen, or with the icon fully visible as a reminder that it is running. You can also select the launch method that suits your needs best. For more information, see the Operation section of this file.

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Licence Agreement

Warranty Disclaimer

Please read the following terms and conditions carefully before using this software.

Use of this software indicates your acceptance of the terms and conditions stated in this document. If you do not agree with them, then do not use the software. Use of Activity Monitor also indicates user's acceptance of the following disclaimer of warranty: "Activity Monitor is supplied as is. Louis Desjardins disclaims all warranties, expressed or implied, including, without limitation, the warranties of merchantability and of fitness for any purpose. Louis Desjardins assumes no liability for damages, direct or consequential, which may result from the use of Activity Monitor, even if advised of the possibility of such damages."

Evaluation and use of Activity Monitor

Activity Monitor is a "shareware program" and is provided at no charge to the user for evaluation. Users are free to copy and distribute it, provided they do not give it away altered, as part of another system (unless specially licenced to do so), or in exchange of any sum of money other than to recover media and handling expenses. The essence of "user-supported" software is to provide users with quality software without high prices, and yet to provide incentive for programmers to continue to develop new products. If you find this program useful and wish to continue to use Activity Monitor after a 30-day trial period, you must make a registration payment to Louis Desjardins. The registration fee will license one copy for use on any one computer at any one time. You must treat this software just like a book. An example is that this software may be used by any number of people and may be freely moved from one computer location to another, so long as there is no possibility of it being used at one location while it's being used at another. Just as a book cannot be read by two different persons in two different locations at the same time.

Special Licences

Customers who wish to purchase upwards of 50 licences may contact Louis Desjardins for special pricing and conditions. Developers who wish to acquire a special distribution licence of Activity Monitor as a part of their own products or in addition to their own products as bonus offerings may also contact Louis Desjardins for such special licences.

ASP Information



ASP Ombudsman Information

This program is produced by a member of the Association of Shareware Professionals (ASP). ASP wants to make sure that the shareware principle works for you. If you are unable to resolve a shareware-related problem with an ASP member by contacting the member directly, ASP may be able to help. The ASP Ombudsman can help you resolve a dispute or problem with an ASP member, but does not provide technical support for members' products. You may reach the ASP Ombudsman by mail, through one of the following means:

1- By Mail:

ASP Ombudsman
545 Grover Road
Muskegon, MI
49442-9427
USA

2- By FAX, at number 616-788-2765

3- Through CompuServe, at address 70007,3536.

The Shareware Concept

Shareware distribution gives users a chance to try software before buying it. If you try a Shareware program and continue using it, you are expected to register. Individual programs differ on details -- some request registration while others require it, some specify a maximum trial period. With registration, you get anything from the simple right to continue using the software to an updated program with printed manual.

Copyright laws apply to both Shareware and commercial software, and the copyright holder retains all rights, with a few specific exceptions as stated below. Shareware authors are accomplished programmers, just like commercial authors, and the programs are of comparable quality. (In both cases, there are good programs and bad ones!) The main difference is in the method of distribution. The author specifically grants the right to copy and distribute the software, either to all and sundry or to a specific group. For example, some authors require written permission before a commercial disk vendor may copy their Shareware.

Shareware is a distribution method, not a type of software. You should find software that suits your needs and pocketbook, whether it's commercial or Shareware. The Shareware system makes fitting your needs easier, because you can try before you buy. And because the overhead is low, prices are low also. Shareware has the ultimate money-back guarantee -- if you don't use the product, you don't pay for it.

More Uses for the Activity Monitor

- Consultants who need to justify their time for billing or other purpose
- Users of on-line services, to contain expenditures
- Parents, to manage the use of the family computer
- Developers who want to gather information for bug fixing
- H.R. officials, to prepare job description or job re-engineering
- Supervisors, to monitor the activities of certain employees
- Subordinates to monitor their supervisor's access to their computer
- etc.

Registering the Activity Monitor

Thank you for choosing the Activity Monitor. We seek to make the registration process as easy as possible, so there are three ways you can register the Activity Monitor:

- 1 Through CompuServe's SWREG forum;
- 2 Through the Public (software) Library (for credit card purchases)
- 3 By mail

[Why register?](#)

Registering through CompuServe's SWREG forum

Simply GO SWREG, and search for program number 2444. You will then be asked to provide the registration information. Once all is entered, the system will ask you to confirm that all the information is correct, and that this is really the program you want to register. Once you confirm your intention to register the Activity Monitor, we immediately receive an e-mail note with your registration information, and your CompuServe account gets charged for the registration fee, which is \$ 15.00 US.

Registering through the Public (software) Library (PsL)

The PsL is a company that provides an ordering service to developers. It does not provide any support for the programs.

If you have a Visa, Master Card, Amex or Discover card, then you can place an order through the PsL.

You can reach the PsL at 800-242-4775, 713-524-6394, or by FAX at 713-524-6398. Do not forget to include your full name, card number and expiration date on the FAX. You can also send orders to the PsL by mail, at P.O. Box 35705, Houston, TX, U.S.A., 77235-5705.

In all cases, the Activity Monitor is program id number 11466. Make sure you use this number to help identify the right program.

Because there is a charge to us for this service, the registration cost through the PsL is \$20.00 US.

Registering by mail

The Control module of Activity Monitor includes a routine to guide you through the preparation of a registration form. First, launch AMCTRL.EXE. Then, click the Utility menu option. In the top frame, there is an option button with the caption View a registration form. It is activated by default. Simply click the OK button in the same frame, and you will be presented with a registration form. Enter all the required information in the top frame. Then, enter the number of licences, and select the payment mode and the currency. Activity Monitor will automatically calculate the amount you need to write the check for. Then, print the form by clicking the Print button. The form will be printed in a format that lets you also use it as its own envelope. Include the check, mail the form, and we will send you the registered package by return mail. The price is once again \$ 15.00, plus a variable shipping and handling cost.

Registration Incentives

Why Register?

The short answer is that you should register because this is a good product, you are using it, and you want to respect the law.

But of course, there is more, and it is more interesting for you. When you register, you get:

- the latest version of the program
- full support
- our telephone number, for emergencies
- a professionally printed manual
- an automatic upgrade to all "same version" releases (example: 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, etc. If you register version 1.2, your licence does not include a free upgrade to 2.0. So, what happens if you register version 1.9? We guarantee at least 2 free upgrades, so therefore, you will receive 2.0 and 2.1 for free. Obviously, if there is a direct jump from version 1.2 to version 2.0, for example, the 2 upgrades rule also applies.) If you register an older version than the current, then you are considered as registered for the current version, not the older one, so your upgrades cover future releases, not the current one. (We make sure you get the full value of your registration, and don't pay for the fact that your BBS may not be up to date.)
- Upgrades to "next version" releases at greatly reduced prices

In addition, you will receive free, registered versions of bonus programs if/when these become available. You will receive them automatically while on the free upgrade list. Support for these bonus programs is provided by their respective authors.

Support Policy

The following document states the official support policy which applies to registered copies of Activity Monitor.

Registered users will receive a phone number, a FAX number and a CompuServe address to reach author as part of their registration package. (Unregistered users will get sufficient support to get the Activity Monitor up and running on their system, in order to ensure proper evaluation of the program, as long as support requests are made by CompuServe Mail.) Registered users will also receive a printed manual.

Support by FAX is free for a three month period following the registration of the product; long distance phone calls will be charged to the customer. After the 3 month period, a fee of \$5, plus communication charges if any, will apply to any support call. Support via CompuServe Mail is free at all times.

Louis Desjardins will do all he can to solve problems registered users may encounter. If a solution cannot be found within a reasonable time frame, Louis Desjardins will, at his discretion, reimburse the registered user for the registration fee of the product.

Registered users will receive unlimited "same version" upgrades. Same version upgrades are upgrades where the first number remains the same, as in for example upgrading from version 1.2 to version 1.3. Notwithstanding , registered users are guaranteed at least 2 upgrades, including as the case may be, an upgrade to a "new version" release, as for example in the upgrade from version 1.9 to 2.0 and then to 2.1.

Bug fix interim releases will be sent automatically to registered users, and are not considered upgrades.

Support calls may not be answered immediately, because of the possible schedule conflicts with the author's "day job", but will be processed as quickly as possible.

Physical Installation

System Requirements

Activity Monitor requires Windows 3.1x, including Windows for Workgroups. The installation, using the Visible Mode, Program Manager Icon option may fail if you are using replacement shells such as the Norton Desktop or others, because the installation program uses Program Manager-specific DDE commands. It is recommended to use the Activity Monitor on systems with 4 MB of RAM or more, although it would work well on systems with less memory. On systems with less than 4 MB of memory, the Activity Monitor may cause a slight degradation of the system's responsiveness.

System files

The Activity Monitor is made of several files. Here is the list of these files, and their functions:

- ACTMON.EXE: The surveillance module. All it does is gather data.
- AMCTRL.EXE: The control module. It allows you to install, de-install, start, close, show or hide the surveillance module. This is also the program that issues reports. This is also the program that manages the level of security you select.
- ACTMON.HLP: This help file
- EYEAM.ICO: The Activity Monitor eye icon.
- PERCNT2.VBX: A library of functions used by the control module. (© Mabry Software)
- APIGUIDE.DLL: A library of functions used by the control module. (© Desaware)
- VBASM.DLL: A library of functions used by the control module. (© SoftCircuits Programming)
- VBCTL3D.VBX: A library of functions used by the control module. (© Bernd Beekes and Jeff Simms)
- UTILDATA.DAT: A data file used by the control module.
- README.1ST: An ASCII format text file that you should read before you start using the program.
- README.TXT: An information text file sometimes (but not always) included in addition to this file. It contains late breaking information not yet included in this file. If the README file is not present in your package, then this file contains all the latest information.
- FILE_ID.DIZ: A description file for the Activity Monitor, used by many BBS systems
- VENDOR.WRI: A Windows Write format text file containing information relevant only to shareware resellers. If you are an end user of the program, this file is useless to you.
- REG.DAT: A data file created by the control module when you fill-out the registration form. If this file is present when you get the program, then someone else used it before. Delete the file, and check for viruses. We ship a virus-free program, but once it was used on someone else's computer, there is no way we can tell whether the files are infected or not.

You may get the files in one of several ways. We provide them in three different ways:

- 1- Unpacked, on a master diskette. This is the way we ship the registered version of the program. Unless you get your master diskette directly from us, make sure you check for viruses!
- 2- Packed in a ZIP file. This is the format we upload the program on most BBS systems. Our ZIP files require PKUNZIP 2.04g to unpack.
- 3- Packed in a self-extracting executable file. This is another way we upload our program on some BBS system which require self-extracting files. You don't need any special program to unpack these files, simply run them like any other DOS program in a clean sub-directory of your hard disk.
- 4- Any other way: we did not ship the program in any other way, so therefore someone used it before. Make sure you check for viruses!

Hard Disk Installation

All you need to do is unzip the packed file in a clean subdirectory on your hard disk. By clean sub-directory, we mean a sub-directory which does not contain any other files than those related to Activity Monitor. If you received the program on a master diskette, you can run it from the diskette, or copy the content of the diskette on your hard disk.

Versions prior to 1.2 did not provide any password protection, so those people interested in using the Activity Monitor for security purposes were strongly advised to move the Activity Monitor to a master diskette. Starting with version 1.2, this is no longer necessary, but still useful. However, you should know that the control module will run faster from the hard disk than from a diskette. See Speed Tips for more details.

Some programs come with a special setup utility that copies all DLL, VBX and other such files to your Windows or System sub-directories. As users, we thoroughly dislike such programs, because they can sometimes replace your own files with their version, not always compatible with your other installed applications. Therefore, we did not and will not include any automatic setup routine other than for the surveillance module, which needs to be installed in this way. Our de-installation routine will remove the surveillance module once you are done with it. Our program will copy VBRUN300.DLL into your System sub-directory if it is not already present there and if it is present on the master diskette, but will not remove it, because so many applications require it. If you do not require it once you de-install the Activity Monitor, then you should remove it manually.

Speed Tips

The Activity Monitor will run faster from a hard disk than from a diskette. If you are using the program from a master diskette, then it is advisable to copy all DLL and VBX files into your System sub-directory (usually called C:\WINDOWS\SYSTEM) and then to delete them from the master diskette. Be careful to copy the DLL's and VBX's onto all the hard disks you will use the Activity Monitor, or else the program will fail to start on the computers where the DLL's and VBX's are not present.

Using the Activity Monitor

The Activity Monitor surveillance module is a very simple program controlled by the Activity Monitor Control Centre, the program that offers the interface between the surveillance module and the user. When you launch the unregistered version of the Activity Monitor Control Centre, the About Box shows first. Click OK to get to the main operation screen. The registered version skips the About Box, which is still available from the menu. The following image is the main operation screen.



This screen is made of five distinct groups.

First, there is the menu bar. A simple click on one of the items on the menu bar executes the task. Report brings forward the Report screen; Setup brings you back to this screen; Utility brings forward the Utility screen; Exit closes the Activity Monitor Control centre; About brings forward the About Box and finally, help launches this help file.

Secondly, there is the Operation Mode frame. The option buttons it contains determine the mode of operation of the surveillance module.

Third, the Password protection and log file encryption frame. The option buttons it contains determine the safety level of the system.

Fourth, the Installation options frame. These option buttons let you select the launch mechanism you prefer for the surveillance module.

Finally, the command buttons. Clicking on the Install button will install the surveillance module with the selected options, while clicking on the Remove button will de-install the surveillance module.

[More on Operation Mode](#)

[More on Safety Level](#)

[More on Launch Options](#)

[More on Installation and De-Installation](#)

Maintenance issues

Controlling the surveillance module "on-the-fly"

More on the Operation Mode...

The surveillance module, ACTMON.EXE, can run under two different modes. The first mode is called Visible. The second mode is called Stealth.

Under the Visible mode, the program appears as an icon. It can be restored as a window, but all that appears is the name of the program. There is no available control.

Under the Stealth mode, the surveillance module is invisible. It will not appear in the Task Manager's list of active programs, and is otherwise very difficult to detect. Windows experts using the right tools will be able to detect the surveillance module running under the Stealth mode, and will possibly be able to disable it. Most people, however, will not notice its presence.

More on Safety Levels...

It is possible to determine choose from three safety levels when using the Activity Monitor. At the low end, you can choose to leave a free access to the log file and the control centre. When you select "None", the log file is written in plain text, available to anyone, and the Control centre is not protected.

You can choose to encrypt the log file, while leaving a free access to the Control Centre. With this option, it is very difficult to retrieve the log file information without using the Control Centre, but anyone with a copy of the Activity Monitor Control Centre will be able to do it. Every time you reinstall the surveillance module, the encryption key changes. The key is however made public to all Activity Monitor Control Centre copies that may be used on your system.

At the higher level, you can select a password that will be required to enter the Activity Monitor Control centre, and any other copy that may be used on your system. The program still generates an encryption key based on your password, but does so in a very intricate manner, to make it difficult to break the code.

Encryption

The encryption scheme used in this program is not very sophisticated, and any competent cryptologist with the appropriate tools will probably be able to break the code within a few days.

The program generates the encryption key internally based either on system-wide parameters, or on the combination of the password and the same system-wide parameters. The password is not the encryption key. To make it even more difficult for would-be code breakers, the encryption key is very long, and the process used to generate it uses systematic procedures as well as a few arbitrary steps that only the developer of the program knows about. Still, this protection does not even come close to that offered by PGP or DES compliant algorithms.

More on Launch Options...

Manual launch

Using this option, all that the Control centre does is it copies the files into the appropriate locations and writes the initialization files. There is no provision for an automatic launch of the surveillance module

WIN.INI RUN line

Older versions of Windows used an entry in the WIN.INI file to launch applications with every start of Windows. Starting with the version 3.1 of Windows, the Start-Up Group in Program manager replaced and enhanced the functionality of the RUN line. Most people don't know about this line, and most people will not venture in the Windows initialization files, making this method a reasonably safe way to launch the surveillance module, especially under the Stealth mode.

Using this option, the control centre installs the program files and writes the INI files, but it also edits the WIN.INI file, to add or modify the RUN= ... line. The line gets cleaned when you remove the program using the Remove button.

WIN.BAT

Some people may not want anyone messing around with their WIN.INI file. For this reason, we developed a routine that replaces your AUTOEXEC.BAT with an otherwise identical file that refers to WIN.BAT rather than WIN.COM to launch Windows. This option requires MS-DOS 5.0 or later to work properly. Once the replacement of the AUTOEXEC.BAT is done, a special WIN.BAT is created. Its hidden flag is set, so that it will not appear in a DIR output, and will not be visible from DOSSHELL or File Manager, provided that their option to show hidden and system files is turned off.

This method is less secure than the WIN.INI method, but some people prefer it.

Icon in Start-Up group

This option, as with the following one, is only available when installing under the Visible mode. As the name indicates, the Control Centre will place the eye icon in the program Manager's Start-Up group. This operation will fail if you set some safety options in Program Manager, to prevent the modification of PROGMAN.INI. Some people rename their Start-Up group. The Control Centre is able to detect the Start-Up group regardless of the name given to it.

If you are using a replacement shell, such as Norton Desktop, Dashboard, PC Tools or others, there is a very good chance that the installation procedure will fail using this method.

WIN.INI LOAD line

Just like the RUN line, this line in the WIN.INI file was used to launch applications, except that applications launched with the LOAD line would run minimized until restored. It is used in exactly the same way as the RUN line.

More on Installation and De-Installation...

In order to install the surveillance module, simply click on the Install button of the Setup screen.

If the surveillance module is already installed, then it will first be removed, including the Initialization files and the log file, and then it will be re-installed using the selected options. The whole process takes only a few seconds. When the files are copied to the hard disk, you will be prompted to choose the font of your choice for written reports. It is advisable to select a common text font, rather than a decorative font. If you don't select any font, the system will select Arial by default. If Arial is not present on your system, Windows will then default to the next available font in alphabetical order when you issue reports. In this case, the result is unpredictable.

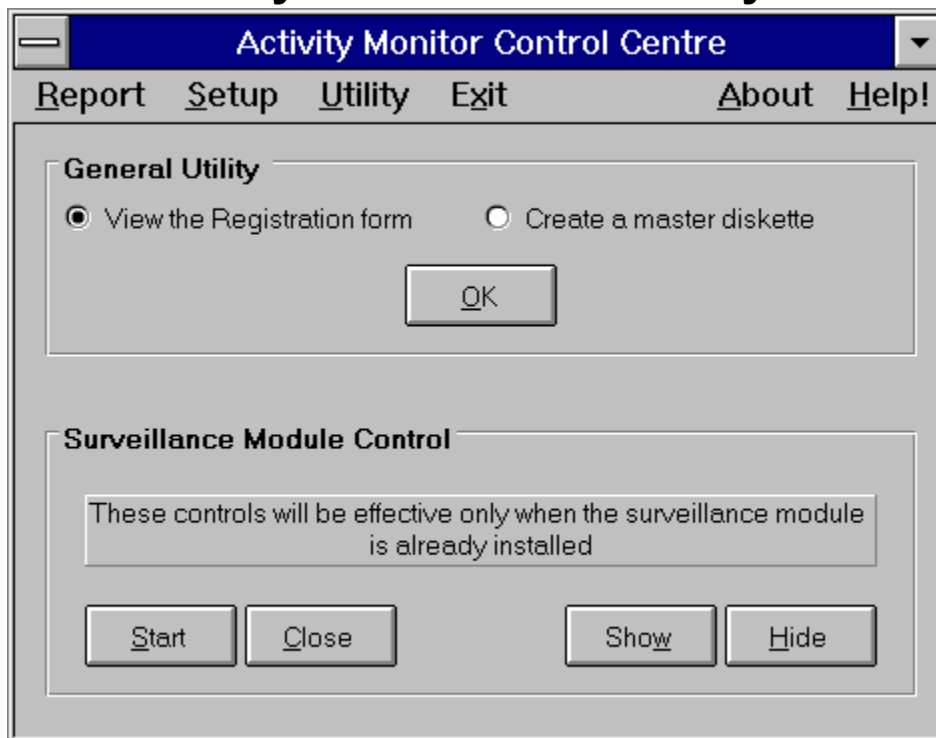
Removal of the surveillance module is also a simple matter. Just click on the Remove button. It is not uncommon with Program Manager that DDE communications fail for some reason, and as a result, sometimes, the removal routine will fail to remove the Activity Monitor icon from the Start-Up group. When a DDE error occurs, you will be notified by the Activity Monitor Control Centre.

Maintenance Issues

The Activity Monitor can (and usually does) collect massive amounts of information in the log file, which grows accordingly. It is therefore strongly recommended to issue reports on a regular basis, and to use the option to purge the log file upon completion of the report. Otherwise, the log file can become very large and waste disk space.

When encryption is used, compression algorithms such as those found in Microsoft's DoubleSpace and DriveSpace, Stac's Stacker, and others, will not compress the log file significantly, because there is very little redundancy in the data. Therefore, the file will occupy almost as much physical space on a compressed disk as it will on a normal DOS formatted disk.

"On-The-Fly" controls and Utility features



When you click on the Utility menu option, this is the screen you get. It contains two frames. The first frame is a catch-all frame, with the miscellaneous functions. Select the action, and click the OK button to proceed.

When you create a master diskette, you effectively move all files in the application's directory to the diskette. This is not just a copy process. The files are copied and then erased from their current location. This process may be unable to erase the file VBRUN300.DLL, because the Activity Monitor Control Centre uses it, and because it is not completely memory resident, like most smaller DLL or VBX files.

The second frame contains controls that have an effect on the surveillance module when it is already installed. You may want to hide it without changing the installation options, or make it visible, or you may want to start it if it is not currently running, or close it. The common feature of these controls is that they will not affect the installation options, and will not affect the log file, like the installation does. Just click the button with the desired feature to do it.

[Registration and the registration form](#)

Issuing Reports



The above screen appears when you click on the Report menu option.

Activity Monitor can produce two types of documents: a log file printout, or an activity report. You select the type of document in the Document frame, at the top of the screen. The Control Centre gives you the opportunity to purge, or in other words erase, the content of the log file once an action is done. To purge the log file, click the "Purge log file on completion" check box in the Options frame. Once you select your type of document, there are three types of action that you can do: send the document to a viewer on screen, export the document in a format usable by other applications, or send the document to the default printer.

Viewing a document

To view a log file, click the Log File option button, and then click the View command button. The content of the log file will be displayed in a special form on screen.

To view an activity report, click on the Activity Report option button, and then click on the View command button. You have an option to issue a full or a summary report. The difference between the two is that the summary report does not detail the open data files.

Printing a document

To print a log file, click the Log File option button, and then click the Print command button. The content of the log file will be sent to the default printer, using the font you selected upon installation.

To print an activity report, click on the Activity Report option button, and then click on the Print command button. You have an option to issue a full or a summary report. The difference between the two is that the summary report does not detail the open data files. The activity report will be sent to the default printer, using the font you selected upon installation.

Exporting a document

The procedure is still the same. Select the type of document you want, and then click the Export command button. A popup menu will appear, asking you to confirm the type of file you want to create. You can create a formatted text file, or a simple ANSI text file. The formatted text file would be usable in applications such as MS Word for Windows, Wordperfect, etc., while the ANSI text file is suitable for just about any Windows application, and will be usable by most DOS applications with only minor changes.

