

Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Four Step Overview](#)

[Creating a Model File](#)

[Editing Existing Models](#)

[Additional Features](#)

[Handles](#)

[Change Provisions](#)

[Important Notice and Disclaimers](#)

[Problems](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

INTRODUCTION

Real Estate Assistant for Windows

Real Estate Assistant converts files captured during on-line sessions with local MLS and Tax Roll providers into a comma delimited format called ASCII. The need for such a conversion is due to the fact that most Real Estate data providers do not generate a common file format and therefore are not directly usable by commercial data base products. ASCII file formats are a standard in the data base industry and provide a common platform for different programs to communicate with each other.

The formatted file generated by Real Estate Assistant can then be read or imported by data bases like Q&A®, FoxPro®, Access® and dBase® programs. Any program that can import an ASCII file format can use the generated output from Real Estate Assistant.

For more information please read the Help file included with Real Estate Assistant for Windows.

Model Editor for Windows

Model Editor creates and modifies Model files for use by Real Estate Assistant.

Model files are template, or keyed files that tell Real Estate Assistant exactly which information the user wishes to extract from captured sessions with on line data bases.

Four Step Overview

1. Capture or log a session with an on line data provider, such as a MLS® or Public Record system to disk.
2. Use Model Editor to identify the information to be extracted and converted from the file.
3. Use Real Estate Assistant to process the file.
4. Import the processed file into your data base, contact manager or word processor.

You are finished.

Creating a Model File

Before you can create a Model file you must first have a captured source file to work with. Most telecommunication programs have some capacity to capture or log the on line session to a disk file. The file can then be edited by a word processor or text editor.

Important: Do not open the captured text file with a word processor as it will place hidden characters in it and disrupt the creation of the model file and processing of extracted information. It is recommended to make a copy of the captured file and then open the copy with the word processor.

Model File Creation

Start Microsoft Windows.

Run Model Editor by double clicking on the MEDITOR icon.
The main screen will be displayed.

Open the Files options from the menu bar and select Load Captured Source File.
A dialog box will be displayed. The Open dialog box defaults to file names with a FIL extension, but you can override this convention if desired.

Select the previously captured on line session file.
The program will display a Model Editor Control Panel window in the upper portion of the screen and a Captured Source File window in the bottom portion.
Note: In the lower portion of the Control Panel is a text box labeled Next Step. This text box displays the next step required during each phase of the model file creation process.

Enter a Model description.
This will help identify the model after creation.

Identifying Records

Drag the mouse across the first unique field label in the first record and click on the First Field button.
This field will be used as an identifier to determine the start of each subsequent record. The field label selected must be in each record for that record to be processed.
AN example of a field label would be PAD: in the following record. The First Field does not have to be the leftmost field label in the first line of the record, but it does need to be unique.

```
PROPERTY ID: 2345 200 14 2          PAD: 2814 SAND DUNE AV  
OWNER NAME  : EDMUND, DENNIS        SUB: QUARRY HILL  
OWNER ADD   : 123 NW 1ST ST         PUR: $ 69420  
           TAMPA FL 33999-1234  
LEGAL DESCR: QUARRY HILL SUBDIVISION BLOCK 14 LOTS 2-3
```

Click the mouse on the first actual line of the record and then click the Retrace button.
The Retrace feature allows you to select a First Field on a line other than the first line of the record but still include lines of information with each record above it. The Retrace feature is limited to ten lines into the record.

Scroll down and click the mouse on the last line of the record and click the MaxLines button.
This identifies the maximum number of lines in each record to be processed. Real Estate Assistant will automatically stop processing a record if it finds the First Field of the next record prior to reaching the

maximum number of lines. This is extremely valuable when dealing with on-line providers that display variable length records, a common function of Tax Roll services.

The program now knows how to determine the beginning and end of each record, and can compensate, in most cases, for unexpected variances in record length.

Identifying Data to be Extracted

Drag across a field label and click the Label button.

The program will search for this field label from left to right and from top to bottom during processing.

Drag across the information you want to extract and click the Extract button.

Note: The information does not need to be on the same line as the field label. The information also does not have to be on the right of the associated label.

During processing, Real Estate Assistant first locates the field label and then automatically adjusts to extract the information, according to the number of characters and lines the selected information is from the field label.

Click the Handles list box and select the appropriate instruction handle.

Handles are used to pre-process data during extraction. Please see the Handles section later in this document.

Enter any desired comments in the Remarks text box.

The Remarks will not be carried into the processed file, but is used for personal commentary and notes.

Click the Next Line button.

This saves the data extraction instructions for the associated line.

Repeat the field label identification procedure for each of the fields of information you wish to extract.

Up to 100 lines of field labels and associated instructions can be entered in a single model.

Saving Model Files

Open the Files options from the menu bar and select Save Model As.

A dialog box will be displayed.

Enter the name the file is to be saved to.

The Save As dialog box defaults to file names with a MDL extension, but you can override this convention if desired.

Model files may be saved to different files.

Note: Selecting the name of an existing Model file will overwrite it

Editing Existing Models

Model files may be loaded from disk and modified. It is highly recommended that when modifying existing files, they be saved to new file names in order to prevent inadvertent loss.

Open the Files options from the menu bar and select Load Existing Model.

A dialog box will be displayed. The Open dialog box defaults to file names with a MDL extension, but you can override this convention if desired.

Select the previously created Model file.

The model will be loaded into memory and be displayed for editing.

Prev Line

The previous line button is used to move to a previous line in the Model.

Next Line.

The NextLine button is used to move to the next line in the Model.

Delete

The Delete button is used to delete a Model Line.

Insert

The Insert button is used to insert a blank line into the Model.

Additional Features

Template

Selecting the Template feature instructs Real Estate Assistant to write the label field of each model line into the first record of the processed file. This is to enable in matching the exported fields to the importing data structure.

Arrange

The Model Editor Control Panel and Captured Source File windows are sizable. This Arrange menu option resets these windows to their original state.

Handles

\$PREP Handle

"\$Prep" causes all non numeric characters to be removed from the field in preparation for math calculations (i.e., \$98,125 to 98125, TV\$28,124.20 to 28124.20). \$PREP converts alpha strings to numbers.

BATHS Handle

Baths will create three separate fields, for Full, Three Quarter and Half Baths, when Baths are entered as a decimal, or if a / is encountered in the targeted area.

Examples:

Data	Output
1.5	1,,1
2	2,,
2.6	2,,1
2.7	2,1,
2.75	2,1,

BEDROOMS Handle

BEDROOMS creates 8 fields from a string, as follows:

12x14/20.5x18/10x12.8/12x10

Will be extracted as:

12,14,20.5,18,10,12.8,10,12

CITY&STATE Handle

"CITY&STATE" is designed to separate city and state fields from a string. Using the CITY&STATE handle will place "Los Angeles" in one field and "CA" in another. Remember, this one handle creates two output fields.

CSZIP Handle

"CSZIP" is a handle designed to separate a string that includes city, state and zip into three separate fields

This handle starts reading right to left. It expects to find the zip, then the state, then the city.

"Los Angeles","CA","09010" will be created from the label PADD: Los Angeles CA 09010.

City, state and country information of foreign counties not in standard city state zip format may yield inconsistent results.

DATE_1

DATE_1 will convert date like those found in PRC® and Realtron®.

Thus 02-JUL-93 becomes 07/02/93

EXCLUDES Handles

While not exactly a handle, the excludes feature, when toggled on, uses a look up table typed in by the user to examine the delineated text.

When used with the ZAP handle : If a word in the table is found, the record is excluded.
This allows records with "City of" etc. to be excluded from the final file.

When used with the Watch For handle: Watch For is similar to ZAP, however, it allows the record to come over into the target output file and places the word "CAUTION" in place of the extracted data, allowing selective user processing on key exclude words.

FEATURES Handle

This feature is used to pull up to 25 lines of features and automatically stops processing when a blank line is found. Each feature line is processed into a separate string.

To use this option mark a field label close to the feature rows to be extracted. Drag across the first feature row and select the FEATURES option from the Handles list box. Then enter the maximum number of lines to be extracted in the Remarks text box.

FIRSTMI Handle

"FIRSTMI" is designed to work with a last name, first name format of data (i.e. SMITH JOHN & MARY). This format is the most common format found in tax records. "FIRSTMI" ignores the first string of characters found (i.e. SMITH in SMITH JOHN & MARY), and extracts the remainder. "FIRSTMI" is designed to work with LASTNAME to access the first name and middle initial, allowing "Mr. and Mrs. John E. Smith". See also FNAME FNF.

FIRSTNAME Handle

"Firstname" is designed to work with a last name, first name format of data (i.e., SMITH JOHN & MARY). This format is the most common found in tax records. "Firstname" ignores the first string of characters found (i.e. SMITH in SMITH JOHN & MARY), and extracts the next text, up until a non alphabetic character (not aA through Zz) is encountered. The first name found, searching from left to right, will be returned.

"Firstname" is designed to work with the "Greeting" and "LastName" handles to create salutations, (i.e. "Dear John"). Also see FIRSTMI, FNAME FNF.

FNAME FNF Handle

"FNAME FNF" is the same as FIRSTNAME except it acts upon fields that have the first name first.

FREEZE Handle

FREEZE extracts data without any further processing. This is used to extract data and keep the same structure including blank characters.

FULLADD1 Handle

This handle creates four fields from a string that contains the street number, name, city, state and zip.
Example: 3456 W HANCOCK ST NEW YORK, NY 10011

will be processed as: 3456 W HANCOCK ST,NEW YORK, NY,10011

FULLADD2 Handle

This works the same as FULLADD1 but also creates a fifth country field.

Example: 131 W.OCEAN VIEW HONOLULU HI 96808 USA

processes as: 131 W.OCEAN VIEW,HONOLULU,HI,96808,USA

FULLADD3 Handle

This works the same as FULLADD1 but also creates three fields and is used when the zip is not present in the string.

Example: 1117 W BECKER STREET LA POINTE CA

processes as: 1117 W BECKER STREET, LA POINTE,CA

FULLPREP Handle

"FullPrep" causes field strings to be converted to all upper case prior to down casing secondary characters, and is used to correct errors contained in Source files (i.e., John&Mary Smith to John and Mary Smith). FULLPREP also converts extracted commas and double quotes (, & ""s) to spaces and deletes such non characters as "/".

FULLSTRIP Handle

This feature is the same as STRIP: but adds the following functionality:
Converts (double quote) characters to (single quote) characters.
Deletes commas and underscores(,_)

Example: WILLIAM B JONES

processes as: WILLIAM B JONES

GREETING Handle

"Greeting" is designed create a field with "Mr.", "Mrs.", Mr. & Mrs" and works with a last name, first name format of data (i.e., SMITH JOHN & MARY). This format commonly found in tax records. "Greeting" ignores the first string of characters found (i.e.,SMITH in SMITH JOHN & MARY), and interprets the remainder. "Mr. & Mrs." will be returned whenever "&", "and", "And", "AND" or a "+" is found in the remaining text. Otherwise "Mr." or "Ms." will be returned depending on the gender of the first name found.

Also see GREET2 FNF, GREET2 and GREET3.

GREET FNF Handle

"GREET FNF" works the same was as GREETING but us used when the first name comes first.

GREET 2 Handle

"GREET 2" looks at two lines of captured text to determine the correct greeting. For example, captured text on two lines, one above the other, where the same last name appears in both lines, would generate the greeting "Mr. & Mrs." as below:

OWNNA: Fisher, Ed
Fisher, Mary Jane

ONETO1 Handle

"Oneto1" is designed for those systems that use ONE for bedrooms instead of 1 or 2 or 3 etc. Point to text that has a THREE, for example, will return a 3 as required in some integrated real estate programs.

PREP Handle

"Prep" causes leading and trailing blank spaces to be stripped, and text processing (i.e., JOHN SMITH to John Smith, CIR to Circle, DR to Drive, etc..).

RIGHT SLICE Handle

"Right Slice" tells REAL ESTATE ASSISTANT to read characters in the desired field, from right to left, until a space (ASCII value 32 decimal) is encountered. All the characters from the end of the field to that point are split off and processed as a separate comma delimited field.

RSLICE2 Handle

"RSLICE2" Is the same as LSLICE2 except it reads right to left.

SIZES Handle

Creates two fields as follows:
12.6x16.9 processes as 12.6,16.9
126 x 143 processes as 126,143
14x12 processes as 14,12

When using SIZES make sure to drag across the entire field area allocated for measurements.

STREET # Handle

"Street #" is designed to pull just the street number from an address. It starts from the left of the text, moves right until it finds a character that is not a number, and saves what it identified as a number.

STREET NAME Handle

"Street Name" is designed to extract just the street name of an address. It starts where "street #" leaves off and saves all of the rest of the address as a character string.

ST#NAMECP Handle

Street, number and compass point separates an identified address area into three fields, the street number, the street name and the compass point (i.e. direction).

WATCH FOR Handle

"WATCH FOR" See the description in EXCLUDES.

ZAP Handle

"ZAP" See the description in EXCLUDES.

Change Provisions

Neither BIDS Data Service, Inc. nor PathWay Solutions are responsible for changes in format that may be made to local real estate on line property listing or tax record systems after the creation, purchase or editing of Real Estate Assistant.

Important Notice and Disclaimer

Real Estate Assistant offers many powerful features and we strive to both improve and add to these. We do not claim that Real Estate Assistant features will handle your captured text files perfectly or as you desire. Data vendors employ different techniques and change these, often at the request of the associations they service, and when this happens, existing models may have to be changed. Variable length fields in captured text may not work. Your comments and suggestions for improving Real Estate Assistant are welcome.

Neither BIDS Data Service, Inc. nor PathWay Solutions shall be held liable for any damages, whether direct or indirect, special or consequential resulting from a failure of Real Estate Assistant or any associated program or module to operate in the manner desired by the user.

Neither BIDS Data Service, Inc. or PathWay Solutions shall not be held liable for any damage to data or property which may be caused whether directly or indirectly by use or misuse of Real Estate Assistant or any associated module. Under no circumstances shall BIDS Data Service, Inc. be liable to any user for damages, to include lost profits, lost savings or other incidental or consequential damages arising out of the use, misuse or inability to use Real Estate Assistant or any associated module.

Problems

Even experienced users encounter problems establishing effective farming routines, gathering data, preparing letters, postcards, and producing these. Real Estate Assistant is but one tool used in these activities, and one that requires either some basic understanding of how computers use data and text or the willingness to learn. The following list of problems are the ones we encounter in phone conversations with users, along with the answers we give as a solution to try. Please call us if you find additional problems. Better yet, send us a copy of the source file you've captured and the model you're using on a floppy disk and we will let you know what the problem is. If the problem is ours, there's no charge. If not, we will let you know and adjust your model to work for you for a reasonable charge.

Data is Not Correct.

The most common cause of incorrect data is an error in the Model File. Make sure the First Field is correct, make sure it is unique, as are the labels used to extract data. If there are wide differences in record lengths in the captured text file, make sure the longest one is used for MaxLines.

Greetings are not correct.

Many things can go wrong with greetings. Real Estate Assistant looks for key words, those most often used, and key phrases. Sometimes it finds data like The City of Whiz & Port Authority, and outputs a greeting that when combined with the extracted names results in "Mr. & Mrs. The and Port.". Users should scan their target file data before they use it and correct such errors. Another reason for scanning? To delete recognized names (such as competitors) that you do not want to farm. Female names are stored in a file called DAMSELS.NDX, if captured data has female names that are not in this list, simply add such names to the bottom of this file. Use an ASCII text editor to "open it", go to the bottom and add more. The maximum for this file is 1,500 female names.

Model does not work.

Some software programs supplied to on line clients insert characters into the text of your source label file that Real Estate Assistant cannot process. These characters are visible with ASCII text processors and include printer initialization strings, pagination characters, carriage returns. Solution: Use a personalized format or the "on line system prompts" to request the data that you normally capture as labels, then use Model Editor to prepare a model file to extract your data.

Mail Merge Letters are not correct.

Addresses, names, titles appear systematically but in the wrong places (skewed is a term used for this). Solution: Most probably your mail merge letter is not identifying all of the fields in your target file. Your model may have written ten fields into each target record, but your mail merge application only reads nine of them. In some programs, the data is skewed after the first record is used. Solution: carefully count and "read" all target file fields, even if you don't actually use them in your mail merge document.

Model does not match source file error.

Real Estate Assistant has attempted to act on information in your model file and has found that the source file you've captured does not meet some of the requested criteria. Solution: Use Model Editor to prepare a new model that matches your captured source data.

Source file is rejected.

Several error messages, depending upon the nature of the data, can result. One major cause is opening a source file with a word processor prior to using it with Real Estate Assistant. Some programs insert extra characters into data files, unseen on the screen but which cause problems for Real Estate Assistant. Solution: recapture the data and use it only as a source file for Real Estate Assistant or be sure to use a text editor that does not insert characters and changes

Acknowledgments

IBM is a registered trademark of the IBM corporation ®.

DOS is a registered trademark of the IBM corporation ®.

dBASE is a registered trademark of Ashton Tate, Inc ®.

123 is a registered trademark of Lotus ®.

Q&A is a registered trademark of SYMANTAC ®.

Realtor is a registered trademark of the National Association of Realtors ®.

Word Perfect is a registered trademark of Word Perfect Corp ®.

WordStar is a registered trademark of Wordstar Corp ®.

PFS: is a registered trademark of Software Publishing Corp ®.

PROCOMM is a registered trademark of Datastorm Technologies ®.

Other Registered Trademarks are owned by their respective companies.

