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Program Goals

XLabel is primarily designed for use in an administrative support environment. It is our goal to provide an easy to use, consistently reliable and inexpensive tool for printing labels. It was decided that an XLabel user should be able to print either from the screen or from a file, in either single or multiple or replicated labels.

XLabel is used to print primarily mailing labels, though it will print to most commercial dye-stamped laser label sheets (we are adding more every day).

XLabel provides automatically incremented serial numbering as well as postal net bar-codes (currently being reviewed for approval).

XLabel attempts to comply with International Postal regulations and standards where possible. This has the effect of limiting serial number placement to the top most line of an address. Additionally, Post Net bar coding is only allowed on the lowest most line.

File:

XLabel allows for the opening and printing of addresses (or other information) from a file. The file must be ASCII printable characters not containing any occurrence of two asterisk together (e.g. **). These are the internal delimiters used by XLabel. (This will change with the second quarter '93 release). See File Formats.

To print from a file:

Choose File from the menu. Choose Open from the popup menu. Using the common file dialogs, locate and open the file desired. There are three print related buttons on the *FileOpen* child window. These are Print, Print All, and Replicate. There is also a multiple selection list box at the bottom of the window. This list box will display all of the addresses found in the file.

The list box will allow for one or more addresses to be chosen to be printed. You can select more addresses than are on a complete sheet of labels. The title bar of the window will keep a running count of the number of addresses chosen. If you choose more than a complete sheet, XLabel is prepared to print multiple sheets. If less than a single sheet is chosen, the addresses will be placed on the sheet beginning at the upper left and flowing down the sheet row, by row. An address can be de-selected by clicking on it a second time to remove the highlight.

The **Print** button will initiate the printing of all of the addresses currently selected.

The **Print All** button will initiate the printing of all of the addresses in the file.

The **Replicate** button will fill the entire sheet with the **single** address chosen and then initiate the printing.

File Formats:

Address definitions:

XLabel considers an address to be one to ten lines of less than one hundred (100) characters each. An address file, as defined by XLabel is a series of addresses, each separated by a blank line all contained in a single file. Our default extension for file names is **.lbl**, but XLabel is not all that particular. Any file name will suffice so long as it contains only ASCII printable characters.

The size of an address file is strictly limited by the management of and size of memory within your machine. XLabel will open the file, counting and displaying the addresses into the list box at the bottom of the file window. We have tested the program with various sizes of address files including one containing twenty thousand addresses without errors. Obviously, the slower the machine and the larger the file, the longer it will take to both open and print the file.

Label :

Designed for administrative support personnel, XLabel follows a well studied model of refined work patterns from clerical employees in government agencies and small businesses. XLabel is modeled on the current label definition approach.

The current label definition is chosen from the ***Label Definition Dialog***. From the time that the dialog is closed with the OK button, the program will print only the style of label that was chosen in the dialog. You can think of the current label definition as a filter for the information that the program is sending through to the printer. Addresses from files or from the screen data entry forms are filtered through this label.

The current label definition is easily changed. It can also be changed with the **File** child window in place, though not with the **Quick** child window as that one is dependent upon the definition resident at the time that the window was created.

Label Definitions

A label definition for the XLabel program requires the following elements:

- number of columns of labels on the sheet;
- number of labels per column (rows);
- height of an individual label;
- width of an individual label;
- margin from the top of the sheet;
- margin from the left hand of the sheet;
- margin between the columns of labels;

All of these measurements are expected in whole or decimal fractions of inches. [Our apologies to our European XLabel users. We expect to have metric measurements in place by the 2nd Quarter 1993 release].

As not all laser printers are precise in how they carry the paper across the transfer wire and the image drum, any new definitions should be tried with scrap paper before using expensive laser labels.

A new label definition is **added** to the XLabel program with the **ADD** button on the label definition dialog selected from the **Label** menu item.

A label definition is deleted from the XLabel program using the **Delete** button from the label definition dialog selected from the **Label** menu item.

The label definition elements edit boxes in the label definition dialog can be cleared using the **Clear** button from the label definition dialog selected from the **Label** menu item.

Selecting a label definition:

The XLabel program uses a label definition as its currently selected goal for printing your labels. This goal is moved into place when you select a label definition. The label definition is selected by choosing Label from the menu. This will bring up the label definition dialog. A list box in the bottom half of the dialog will display the currently available label definitions.

When a definition from the list box is selected (highlighted with a mouse click), it will populate the edit boxes in the dialog with its specific values. Whatever label definition is highlighted when the **OK** button is pressed will be the currently selected label definition.

i.e.: If you are using Avery:5163 as the current label definition and you wish to change to Avery:5162, you select Label from the menu. When the dialog is displayed, click the mouse on the definition for Avery:5162 and then press the **OK** button. Thereafter, until the program is shutdown or you change the selection, Avery:5162 is the label definition that the program will print.

A label definition can be made the default by checking the **Use as default** check box prior to pressing the **OK** button. That label definition will be saved and used as the default definition whenever the XLabel program is invoked.

Resolution:

The label definition chosen is defined in inches and decimal fractional inches (e.g. **.23** inches). These measurements are translated to the level of precision of the currently selected printer. This resolution means that the same settings on different printers will have different effects.

For instance, if your printer definition has its resolution in dots per inch (DPI) set to 300, then potentially a change in your label definitions can have an impact down to the one three hundredth part of an inch. A left margin of **.1** would move the left edge of the label over 30 dots to the right (or one tenth on an inch) . A left margin of **.11** would move it over 33 dots.

The same label definition used on a machine with the printer resolution set at 75 DPI would still move the label over a tenth of an inch, but the margin of slop is four times greater as **.1** left margin here only translates to 7 dots (true, these are bigger dots).

The margin of error is inversely proportional to the level of the printer resolution.

All of XLabel's label definitions as well as default values are stored in the ***XLabel.ini*** file that accompanies this program. These label definitions are absolutely critical to the functioning of the program. Should you get any strange errors (UAE's or equivalent) or find printer errors, first check the ***XLabel.ini*** file for corruption. As you add label definitions to your program, you should periodically make backups of this file to ensure that your definitions can be restored without retyping.

QUICK

This menu item is used when you wish to print less than a full sheet of labels and are prepared to enter the information using the data entry dialog.

This menu presents three choices,

Multiple,
Single,
or **Replicate.**

All of the menu choices will use the same approach. Each will present a child window representing the sheet of labels. On this child window will be drawn a representation of the current label definition.

Multiple:

This choice will display the child window as a sheet of the labels defined. At the bottom of the child window are displayed three buttons; Print, Close and Fonts.

Labels are selected from the child window by clicking over them with the mouse. This will cause a data entry dialog to appear which will accept an address for that particular label on the sheet. As the choice implies, multiple labels may be chosen (up to and including the entire sheet). As a label is chosen, and after returning from the data entry dialog, that label will be marked with our trademark red X. To de-select a label, simply click over it a second time.

The **Print** button will initiate the printing of all of the labels selected. It will return after sending the addresses on their way to the printer. The labels are not de-selected automatically.

The **Close** button closes the window before or after printing. The window can also be closed from the system bar in its menu.

The **Fonts** button will bring up the common font control dialog.

Single:

This choice will display the child window as a sheet of the labels defined. Unlike the **Multiple** choice above, this sheet of labels is displayed using the complete child window and there are no buttons provided as the window will close after printing a single label.

Labels are selected from the child window by clicking over them with the mouse. This will cause the data entry dialog to appear which will accept an address for that particular label on the sheet. As the choice implies, a single label may be chosen. As a label is chosen, and after returning from the data entry dialog, that label will be marked with our trademark red X. The print feature will then be automatically invoked.

Replicate:

A replicated label is where a single address is used to fill an entire sheet of labels. This choice represents a blending of the two previous functions.

Choose any label from the sheet of labels that are displayed. This will invoke the address data entry dialog. Once the address is entered and the OK button is pressed, the address will be replicated throughout the entire sheet. When printed, the sheet will be filled with the address information chosen. It will also be marked with the red X.

If satisfied with the address entered then, choose OK from the data entry dialog. The print feature will automatically be invoked.

Settings:

This menu provides the options for setting Fonts, Serial number parameters, Bar code , and preferences.

Fonts:

The fonts choices available within XLabel are the same as available through Windows. These will include your defined printer fonts as well as any other fonts known to Windows.

This menu item brings the common fonts dialog and its choices. These choices are used for all label printing after the dialog is closed with the OK button.

Serial Number:

XLabel provides serial number functions for those users wishing to track mailing responses or automatically incremented label printing.

An XLabel style serial number is composed of the following parts:
a fill character;
an initial label identifier number;
the amount to increment the initial number by.

A typical serial number will resemble the following:

*****TenaxSW_R:1101

An XLabel serial number is right justified on the top line of the label in the direct mail industry standard format. It is composed (right to left) of the unique address identifier (the incremented number - the **1101**), a number prefix (the **TenaxSW_R:**) for internal office use, and the fill character (*).

Fill Character:

The fill character can be any ASCII printable character, but is restricted to a single character. It can have any and all attributes of any regular font.

Prefix:

The serial number prefix is composed of up to fifty (50) ASCII printable characters in either upper or lower case. A prefix will provide the ability to encode departmental level responsibility.

Initial label identifier number:

Can be any integer number. (Future releases will accommodate alphanumeric numbering schemes).

Increment by number:

Can be any integer number. We have found that one (1) is a really good number to use. It is lighter and less filling.

Serial numbering can be turned **on** or **off** from either the **Settings** menu option to **Serial Number** option from the popup menu. A small dialog containing three buttons (OK, Cancel and Settings...), and two checkboxes.

The checkboxes indicate the current state of serial numbering, either **on** or **off**.

The

Settings

button will also bring up a dialog that will allow the editing the elements of the serial number. The first of two checkboxes will allow XLabel to automatically store the last serial number to be used the next time the program is used. The second button saves the values showing in the edit fields as the default state of serial numbering, i.e. to be the base number when the program is next used.

Bar Code:

This feature is not yet available. We are in the process of getting Postal Net approval for our printing approach and expect to have this feature available in the 2nd quarter 93 release. Other bar coding standards are being added for this release.

Preferences:

This menu choice brings up the preferences dialog . The choices offered here are Intelligent Fonting initial settings and serial number settings. The Serial Number options are previously described.

Intelligent Fonting:

Intelligent Fonting is the concept of altering the font size selected by the user if it is too large for the label definition currently chosen. This is somewhat problematic. Should the program just decrement the font size down to the lowest common denominator? at the whole address level or line-by-line? address by address? or by the whole sheet? and what about True Type fonts? non-scalable printer resident fonts?

All of these issues are being addressed. As a result we see that the Intelligent Fonting feature will get very much more complicated. As it is, the Intelligent Fonting feature in this version of your program may be found to be less than intelligent. Our apologies. It will function without error under a wide range of conditions. It will not function at all under almost as many conditions.

The best use of this version of the XLabel program is to set your fonts prior to printing. Experiment, trying the different fonts and sizes available for the labels that you use most. We have found that the default size of 10 points Times Roman (or equivalent) or 8 point line printer will work well with almost all label definitions.

Troubleshooting and things to do:

Problems encountered in using XLabel will resolve to printer problems, label definition discrepancies, or corrupted XLabel.Ini file.

XLabel.ini

All of XLabel's label definitions as well as default values are stored in the ***XLabel.ini*** file that accompanies this program. These label definitions are absolutely critical to the functioning of the program. Should you get any strange errors (UAE's or equivalent) or find printer errors, first check the ***XLabel.ini*** file for corruption. As you add label definitions to your program, you should periodically make backups of this file to ensure that your definitions can be restored without retyping.

Precision

Should your addresses not print within the boundaries of the label chosen, try altering the Label definitions chosen from the menu (LABEL). By altering the definitions in fractional parts of an inch, you can compensate for any deviation of your printer from the "printer standard".

License

This release of the XLabel 2.03sw laser label printing program for the Microsoft Windows 3.x operating system is distributed as a shareware product. You may feel free to make and use copies of this program for the purpose of evaluating its suitability.

Should you decide that XLabel meets your laser label printing requirements, you can register and receive the latest copy for a fee of \$35.00 sent to:

XLabel Registration
Tenax Software Engineering
2103 Harrison Ave NW
Ste. 141
Olympia WA 98502

A retail copy of XLabel, including help, manual.txt (print it yourself) and increased capabilities is available for \$35.00. A printed manual is an additional \$40.00.

Call (206) 866-1686 to place an order or request information on site license discounts. Checks are accepted. Visa and Mastercard, we're working on. Purchase orders are accepted from most companies, schools, and governmental agencies.

Your registration fee entitles you to use this software on a single computer and to make as many copies of XLabel as you require for backup purposes. You will also be informed of future upgrades.

Future Features:

The following features are currently under development for future releases of XLabel:

1. metric label definitions
2. multiple sized labels per sheet (diskette and cassette label definitions)
3. bit map placement
4. bar-codes (non postal)
5. capture to file
6. file filtering
7. alphanumeric serial numbering