

FLASH CARDS FOR WINDOWS
Release 1.2d
User's Guide

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Introduction

This Flash Cards system was created to help people studying for tests to memorize information, by providing memory drill on the questions and answers in a database.

The system allows the user to specify which database to use, keeps track of the number of errors in a test, and offers to re-test the user on questions for which the answers were missed the first time around.

While it is possible to change the wording of existing questions and answers, the Shareware version does not have facilities for adding to or deleting from databases. The version which is sent to registrants *does* have the facility to create new databases and add to and delete from existing databases.

Author

This system was written by John Michell, of Startext Computing Services Ltd. It was released to the general public on November 25, 1992, by being uploaded to the NOVLIB forum on CompuServe. It replaced an earlier version, which was written in Microsoft Excel's macro programming language.

The system uses databases of questions and answers which were developed by the author and others as they prepared for the tests leading to Novell's Certified NetWare Engineer (CNE) and/or Certified NetWare Instructor (CNI) designation.

The present version was programmed in Visual Basic, in response to requests from people who did not have access to Excel. It is faster and easier to use than the previous version. The same databases of questions and answers are used, though the Excel spreadsheets have to be converted to DBase files to be usable with this version.

Disclaimer

Though all reasonable care has been exercised in creating this system and the databases that accompany the system or are available as options, the student is wholly responsible for knowing the content of the course being studied.

The system is supplied on an "as-is" basis. The author and Startext Computing Services Ltd. disclaim all warranties, expressed or implied, including, without limitation, the warranties of merchantability and of fitness for any purpose.

The author and Startext Computing Services Ltd. assume no liability for damages, direct or consequential, which may result from the use of the Flash Cards system, even when the author and/or Startext Computing Services Ltd. have been informed of the possibility of such damages. In no case shall the liability of the author and/or Startext Computing Services Ltd. exceed the registration fee paid.

Shareware

The Flash Cards system is "Shareware", and is licensed at no charge to the user for evaluation. The user may share it, but may not alter the program or documentation or include the Flash Cards system as part of another system. If the user continues to use the Flash Cards system after a 21 day trial period, a registration payment must be made to Startext Computing Services Ltd. The registration fee will license one copy for use on any one computer at any one time.

Users are encouraged to pass a copy of the Flash Cards system and documentation along to friends and colleagues for evaluation. Please encourage them to register, too.

Benefits of Registration

Upon receipt of the registration form and fee, registrants will be sent a copy of the complete Flash Cards system, which includes the facility to create new databases and to add to and delete from existing ones.

Registrants will be included in a mailing list, so that they can be notified of various changes and improvements in the system. For example, it is possible that new users may stress the system in new ways, and may run into bugs of which the author is unaware. The author commits to correcting such errors as quickly as possible, and to informing registered users of such corrections.

New releases of the system will be issued when substantial new features are available. Registered users will be offered upgrades at discounted rates. Furthermore, the author and other users of the system will be developing new databases as they prepare to take tests on additional Novell courses. Registered users will be informed about these new databases too.

Copyright Information

The Flash Cards for Windows program is copyright © 1992 by Startext Computing Services Ltd. Novell and NetWare are registered trademarks of Novell, Inc.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FLASH CARDS SYSTEM

The Flash Cards System consists of the following files:

FLASH.EXE

This is the executable file. It was written in Visual Basic with the Pioneer Software Q&E extensions, and can be legally run by a user who owns neither Visual Basic nor Q&E.

FLASH.WRI

This user's guide.

ORDER.WRI

An order form that should be filled in and eMailed, mailed or faxed to the Author or Startext Computing Services Ltd. (see above), to register the system and to order additional databases.

QEVDBF.VBX

A run-time file which must be available to allow a Q+E application to run on a system where Q+E/VB is not installed. On CompuServe, the file is available as FQEVB.EXE in the NOVUSER forum.

VBRUN100.DLL

A run-time file which must be available to allow a Visual Basic application to run on a system where Visual Basic is not installed. If you downloaded the system from a bulletin board, this file was not included in the zip, as many users already have the file. On CompuServe, the file is available as FVBRUN.EXE in the NOVUSER forum.

(These last two files are made available by their respective manufacturers to be distributed with applications created with their programming languages, and are legitimately included with this system.)

COMMDLG.DLL

A required dynamic link library file that is not always available on Windows 3.0 systems. Like VBRUN100.DLL, this file was not included in the zip, as many users already have it. On CompuServe, the file is available as COMDLB.ZIP in Lib 9 of MSBASIC.

NW3SM.DBF

The question and answer database for the NetWare v3.11 System Manager test. This is included so that users can see the value of the system.

PKUNZIP.EXE

If you received this system on diskette, the PKUNZIP program was included so that you could "unzip" the files. This program is part of the PKZip Fast! package, available from PKWARE Inc., 7032 Ardara Avenue, Glendale, WI 53209, and from bulletin boards.

INSTALLING THE SYSTEM

The zipped files should be extracted into a directory on your hard disk. Create a new Program Group item with FLASH.EXE as the command line and a reference to this directory as the working directory.

RUNNING THE SYSTEM

When the FLASH.EXE program is launched, a "Flash Cards" application window opens on your desktop. Text boxes show the currently selected database and category as "unspecified". Five command buttons are visible (four in the Shareware version), but only the *Choose Database* and *Exit Flashcards* buttons are enabled.

Selecting the *Choose Database* button causes a standard Windows file open dialog box to be displayed. Select the database you want, and select OK. The *Choose Category* and the *Maintain Database* buttons are now enabled as well (only the *Choose Category* button in the Shareware version).

Taking a Test

When you select the *Choose Category* button, the system opens the database specified and creates a list of the categories available in the database. A new screen is displayed, with a list of the categories found, and two command buttons: *Done* and *Cancel*.

Choose a category from the list, then select *Done*. The system now loads all the questions from this category, and shows a new screen called Flash Cards Questions.

The system randomly selects a record from among those in the current category, and displays the question in the box called Question. The cursor is in another box called Your Answer. Type in your answer, and press the Tab key to check your answer against the one in the database.

If your answer exactly matches the answer in the database (upper and lower case letters are assumed to match), the system subtracts one from the number of questions left, and shows its next random selection.

If your answer does not exactly match the answer in the database, the latter is shown in the box called Expected answer.

You now have three choices (four, if you include *Stop Test*).

If your answer was "close enough" and you want the system to treat your answer as correct, choose *Accept Answer*. As in the case where your answer exactly matched the expected answer, the system decrements the number of questions left, and shows its next random selection.

If you want the system to ask you the question again later in this session, choose *Next Question*. The system will add one to the "errors so far" field (if this is the first time you have missed this question), and choose another question.

If you want to change the wording of the question, the answer, or both, you can make the appropriate changes and choose *Modify*. The database is updated, and the session proceeds as though you had chosen *Accept Answer*.

The End of the Drill

When all the questions have been answered (or if you select *Stop Test*), the system presents a dialog box like the following

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2 errors

When you choose the *OK* button, the system asks whether you want to re-test on your errors (if there were any). If you select *Yes*, the system will drill you on just those questions for which you selected the *Next* question button.

If you select the *No* button (or if you had no errors), the system returns to the opening screen, and you can choose to be drilled on the same category (by clicking on the *Re-test* button), another category, another database and category, or exit.

Commands on the Menu Bar

There are a number of commands which are accessible from the menu bar of the startup screen.

File New

To create a new database, choose File New from the menu bar. A standard Windows dialog box is shown so you can specify where and under what name you want your new database to be created.

File Open

Choosing File Open from the menu bar is equivalent to selecting the *Choose Database* button. A standard Windows dialog box is shown so you can specify which database you want to use.

File Save As

This facility is not available in this version.

File Exit

Choosing File Exit from the menu bar is equivalent to selecting the *Exit Flashcards* button. The system closes the active database and exits.

About

Choosing About / About Flashcards from the menu bar causes a dialog box to be displayed which gives copyright and version information about the Flashcards system.

Maintaining the Database

(This function is not available in the Shareware version.)

To maintain a database, first choose the database from the startup screen, then select the *Maintain Database* button. A new form appears, which initially has only some labels and command buttons. The system will not show any questions or answers until the user has chosen a category to work with. Use the *Choose* button to see a list of the existing categories, and the *New* button to create a new one.

Once a category has been chosen or created, you can now modify the category, question and answer shown by simply overtyping them. You can move to the previous or next question by selecting the appropriate button. And you can add a new question and answer by selecting the *Add* button.

There is no need to modify the number field: it is there for your convenience in finding a question you may want to change. Question numbers are reassigned when you exit the maintenance function (unless you have neither added nor deleted any records).

Selecting the *Delete* button deletes the current record (after you have been given a chance to reconsider). If you delete the only record in a category, the data fields are hidden, and you have to choose another category to proceed.

Selecting the *Definition* button causes a dialog box to be shown, asking you what term you want to have replace the letters XYZ in the question "What does XYZ stand for". Text entered in lower case, such as "afp", is capitalized in the question that is created.

Selecting the *Provides* button causes a dialog box to be shown, asking you what term you want to have replace the letters XYZ in the question "What does XYZ provide". Text

entered is not capitalized in the question that is created.

Selecting the *Replicate* button causes a new record to be created with the same text for category, question and answer as the currently displayed one. The newly-displayed record can then be modified.

When you want to end the maintenance function, select the *Exit* button. If you have added or deleted records, you are asked whether you want to resequence the database. Choosing *Yes* causes new record numbers to be assigned to the records in the database. Choosing *No* causes the resequencing to be skipped, and choosing *Cancel* aborts the Exit command.

Note: running a test against a database which has been added to or deleted from but not resequenced will cause unpredictable errors. It is reasonable to skip resequencing only if you know you will be doing more work on the database before running any tests.

A Note on the Answers

The convention used in creating answers is that if there is a list of terms in the answer (such as Ethernet, Token/Ring and Arcnet) they will be listed in alphabetic order with commas between them and no conjunctions. So the answer to "What are the commonly used cabling types" would be "Arcnet, Ethernet, Token/Ring".

This alphabetical order convention is not followed if there is a logical order or time sequence in the answer, so the answer to "What are the steps in installing NetWare" would be "Prepare hardware, install operating system, generate workstation shell".

Marketing your databases

If you create new databases, and would like Startext to handle the distribution for you, contact Startext at the address given above.

Making Suggestions

Startext is very interested in creating improved versions of the Flash Cards system and therefore welcomes any suggestions you may have. Please send them to the address given above.