

# ontents

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## It's not as bad as it looks!

Thank you for purchasing this product.

The CD-ROM of CD-ROMs (hereafter referred to as CoC) is a directory of CD-ROM titles available for various computer systems. Screen shots, box photos, and even reviews are available for many of the titles listed. CoC also contains listings of the businesses involved in producing or distributing CD-ROMs, as well as people you can contact in these businesses.

CoC isn't as hard to use as the size of this instruction booklet may have led you to believe. As a matter of fact, you could probably use it quite effectively without ever reading this booklet. It includes extensive online help, and was designed so you shouldn't even *need* that help. If you abhor documentation, like most people, we suggest reading only the next two sections--*Minimum System Requirements* and *Loading the Directory*.

Once you feel familiar with CoC, you may want to read about the extended search functions in this booklet or in the online help. You'll probably figure them out fairly quickly, though.

## Minimum System Requirements

CoC requires a 286 PC, Windows 3.1, a VGA display, and 2 megabytes of RAM. No hard drive space is required.

We *recommend* a 386 PC, Windows 3.1, a Super VGA display, 4 megabytes of RAM, and a sound board. Many of the CDs listed in this directory are multimedia CDs, and you would need a system like this to make maximum use of them. The CoC directory also uses graphics and sound, and contains screen snapshots and audio clips from some of these CDs, and to *really* see these effectively you will need a multimedia PC.

# Loading the Directory

## 1. Load Windows.

CoC uses a Windows interface. So you'll need Windows loaded to make use of it.

## 2. Run the SETUP program.

Inside the Windows Program Manager, select the File menu; click the Run item near the bottom. You should type "D:\INSTALL.EXE", substituting the appropriate drive letter for your CD-ROM drive. Or you can click the *Browse...* button and use the Windows item selector to find the INSTALL.EXE program.

Once you've entered the program name in the blank, click the *OK* button. The SETUP program will run. *All this does* is create a program group for CoC. If you want to do this yourself, you can; the CoC main program is COC.EXE, stored in the root directory of the CD-ROM.

## 3. Run CoC.

Open up the CoC program group in the Program Manager. Double-click on the CD-ROM of CD-ROMs icon. The program runs completely off the CD-ROM, so it doesn't eat up any space on your hard drive.

## Using the Directory

When CoC first loads, you will see a nice graphic screen. In the upper left corner will be the issue number and date of CoC. In the lower right corner will be five buttons; *Information...*, *CD-ROMs...*, *Businesses...*, *Who's Who...*, and *Exit*. The first button, *Information...*, will provide you with a variety of information about CoC. The middle three are grouped together; these bring up different search dialogs, allowing you to search the directories. The *Exit* button will end the CoC program and close its window.

The search buttons, *CD-ROMs...*, *Businesses...*, and *Who's Who...*, will each display a dialog for searching the relevant database. *CD-ROMs* is for searching through the CD-ROM titles in our directory. *Businesses* is for searching through the list of CD-ROM publishers and distributors. And *Who's Who* is for searching through the list of people involved with CoC and the companies listed in our *Businesses* database.

## General Information

CoC contains so much information that simply looking through all of it isn't practical or useful. To help you get the most of CoC we have included a flexible search capability. Basically, you tell CoC to search for all items that match some condition you specify. (We'll get to those conditions in a minute.) CoC will then "mark" every item that met your condition and show you a list of them. You'll then be able to flip through the list and examine any item in detail, or you can add another condition to the search and tell CoC to search again.

Whenever you select one of the search buttons, a Search Dialog will appear. This is where you specify the condition you want CoC to use. All three search dialogs are very similar; to help you distinguish them, the name of the database (*CD-ROMs*, *Businesses*, or *Who's Who*) will appear in the title bar. Since most of the time you'll be using the *CD-ROMs* database, we'll use that as the example in this discussion.

Near the top of the search dialog is a box labeled "Look for:". Click here with the mouse and a cursor will appear; you can then type what it is you want CoC to find. This is your "requirement"; anything that doesn't match this will not be shown in CoC's list. You can type anything in here, including wildcards. (Wildcards are discussed below.)

## Search Fields

Below the "Look for" box is a larger box containing eight "check boxes". These represent the different information stored for each item. For each of these boxes that is checked, CoC will try to find any items where that information matches your requirement entered in the "Look for" box. If even one of these pieces of information matches your requirement, the entire item is "marked". Usually you would select only one or two of these boxes.

If you don't select *any* of the check boxes, you're telling CoC not to search *anywhere*. Since this doesn't make a whole lot of sense, CoC will ask what you want to do. If you've already made a search, CoC will ask if you want to display the results of that search again (click *Yes* or *No*). If you haven't searched for anything, CoC will ask if you want to see the *entire* database. Again, click *Yes* or *No*. In either case, answering *Yes* will display a listed of all the marked items; clicking *No* will abort the search and close the search dialog.

# Wildcards

Without wildcards, searching would be much harder to use. You could enter "life" as your search string and click *Titles* to search only CD-ROM title names, but that would match only items that contained *only* "life" in the title. This is hardly useful!

In a way, a letter is a wildcard. Each letter in the search string will match the same letter if it's in upper or lower case--either one will do. This way you don't have to worry about proper capitalization. CoC worries about that for you.

There are five other characters that CoC recognizes as wildcards; each is described here. You can combine almost any wildcards you like.

- \*** This is the most powerful wildcard. It will match *any number* of letters, numbers, or symbols. Here are some examples:
  - a\*** This matches everything beginning with "A" or "a".
  - \*ing** This matches everything ending with "ing", "ING", "iNg", or whatever.
  - \*hit\*** This matches everything that contains "hit" in it somewhere.
- ?** This wildcard will match *one* letter, number, or symbol. Some examples:
  - ?a\*** This matches everything with "a" as the second letter.
  - \*n?** This matches everything with "n" as the second to last letter.
- #** This wildcard is similar to the \* wildcard, except that it matches one or more *digits*. This is handy if you are looking for a number, but you're not sure what the number is. Here are a few examples:
  - #\*** This matches everything that starts with some sort of number.
  - \*#** This matches everything that ends with some sort of number.
  - \*#\*** This matches everything that has a number in it.
- <** This wildcard allows you to set up a range. You specify a minimum and a maximum, and everything between the two will match the requirement. You can leave off the minimum or the maximum (but not both, of course). You **cannot** use the \*, ?, and # wildcards in your minimum or maximum, but you shouldn't really have to. Something to remember is that the items you want to find must be *less than* the upper end of your range; for example, specifying z as the upper range *will not* give you anything starting with z, because anything starting with z will be higher than your upper range. Here are some other examples:



<b>a&lt;z</b>	This matches everything from A to Y.
<b>&lt;f</b>	This matches everything starting with something that comes before "F".
<b>&lt;100</b>	This matches everything less than 100 (great for prices!)
<b>100&lt;</b>	This matches everything bigger than 100 (if you like high-priced CDs).
<b> </b>	This isn't precisely a wildcard. Rather, it lets you chain together several wildcards. If something matches one of the wildcards, it is considered to match the entire condition. Some examples:
<b>a* f*</b>	This matches everything beginning with "a" or "f". This is not the same as a<f.
<b>a&lt;f t&lt;z</b>	This matches everything between "a" and "f" and everything between "t" to "z".

Notice that the \* and ? wildcards are similar to those used by MS-DOS. The #, <, and | wildcards are special additions available in CoC. If you forget how to use these wildcards, you can click the *Help* button in the [search dialog](#) to get a complete description of them (and everything else in the dialog).

## Starting the Search

Once you've entered your search string, you can start the search by clicking *OK* in the search dialog. (Clicking *Cancel* will abort the search.) In either case, the search dialog will be removed from the screen, to avoid cluttering the display. You can bring it back by clicking the appropriate search button in the main CoC window.

If you try to start a search without a wildcard, CoC will ask you if you meant to put the wildcards in. It will present a dialog with three main choices: match *Any* part of a field, match just the *First* part of a field, or require an *Exact* match in a field. (You can also choose *Help* or *Cancel* here.) Just choose which type of search you meant and CoC will put in the proper wildcards for you.

Note that if you put *any* wildcard, CoC will assume you know what you're doing and won't ask you anything.

While CoC is searching, a box will be displayed, showing a bar that fills in as items in the database are searched. When the bar is filled, the search is done. Each time CoC searches one of its databases, the bar will fill; if you tell it to do a search that requires it to look in four different databases, the bar will fill four times; this is normal. CoC's searching is very fast, even though it's reading from the CD-ROM, so you won't have to wait long at all to see the results!

## Using Search Results

Once the search is completed, a **Browse Window** appears. In it is a list of all the items that matched your search. You can scroll through this list by using the window scroll bar. You can also resize the window to your liking. If you see an item you'd like more information on, just click on it; the browse window will be replaced by an **Item Information** window. More on these windows in a bit.

At the top of the browse window you will see a menu bar., containing the items *Close!*, *Print!*, *Copy!*, *Search!*, and *Help!*. None of these items will produce a menu; rather, they act more like buttons--when you click on them, that function is done right away.

The *Close!* item will close the browse window. It's more convenient to click this item than to double-click the system menu in the corner of the window. The *Print!* item will print the results of the search to the printer. The *Copy!* item copies that same information to the clipboard. The *Search!* item reopens the Search dialog, so you can add another condition to the search. (See below for more information on multiple search conditions.) The last item, *Help!*, displays help on the browse window.

## Item Information Windows

These windows display when you click an item in a browse window. Just as the search dialogs and browse windows all appear similar for the different databases, so do the information windows.

As with the browse windows, item information windows have a menu bar. An information window's menu bar will have the items *Close!*, *Print!*, *Copy!*, *Search!*, *Browse!*, and *Help!*.

The *Close!* item will close the item information window. *Print!* will print the contents of the item information window; if the item information window is for a CD-ROM title, the icons will be printed as text descriptions. *Copy!* will copy the window's contents to the clipboard--the same text that would have been printed. *Search!* will close the item information window and reopen the [Search dialog](#). *Browse!* will close the item information window and reopen the browse window. And *Help!*, of course, will display help on the item information window.

There are also four buttons near the bottom of the screen; these are for moving through items without returning to the browse window. The left-pointing arrow with a line moves to the first item in the browse window. The plain left arrow moves to the previous item. The right arrow moves to the next item, and the right arrow with a line moves to the last item. Just click the arrow you want.

The rest of the items in the item information window are different, depending on what database the item is from. What you're actually seeing are the contents of the databases. Usually this is just text, although in the CD-ROM Item Information window you will see a category icon and platform icons. You can click on these platform icons to see what they mean if it isn't immediately obvious.

## Multiple Search Conditions

CoC's search is very flexible. You can combine the results of multiple searches in several different ways. We'll explain those ways in just a bit.

To do a search with multiple conditions, you start the same way as you would a normal search. That is, click on one of the search buttons; a search dialog will appear. Enter the first part of the search--put what you're looking for in the "Look for" area, and click any appropriate boxes. Then click on *OK*. As usual, the status box will appear while CoC searches the database. Once the search is done, the browse window will appear. From here, click on *Search...* again to return to the search dialog.

Now enter the next part of the search and click on *OK*. CoC knows that you've already performed a search (and it remembers the results) so it will ask you what you want to do with the old search results. You have five choices here; you can also click *Cancel* to abort the search, or *Help* to get online help.

Your first choice is to display the results of the old search. Click *View* if this is what you want. This is the default option.

Your next choice is to ignore the results of the previous search. Click *New* if this is what you want to do.

Your third choice is to search only those items found in the last search. This is sometimes called an "AND" operation, since only those items that were found in the last search *and* those items that match the new search condition will be marked for browsing. You can use this to "narrow down" your search. Click *And* to choose this option.

Your fourth choice is to merge the results of the two searches. This is usually called an "OR" operation, because those items that matched the last search *or* the new search will get marked for browsing. You can use this to "widen" your search. Click *Or* to select this option.

Your last choice is to eliminate those records that match the new search condition from the old search. This is called a "NOT" operation, because you're keeping everything that does *not* match the new search. You can use this to "prune" your search--to remove items that you don't want to be bothered with. Click *Not* if this is the option you want.

Perhaps a few examples will make this clearer. As a first demonstration, let's say you want to find all the "Sports & Recreation" CD-ROMs that cost less than \$50.

1. Click *CD-ROMs* in the main window to display the search dialog.
2. Enter *"\*recreation\*"* in the "Look for" field and change the check boxes so only "Category" is selected.
3. Click *OK*. This search will find every CD-ROM that has "recreation" somewhere in its category name. (If you had already done a search, select *New* from the Multiple Search Conditions dialog.)
4. When the browse window appears, click on *Search...* to redisplay the search dialog.
5. This time, enter *"<50"* in the "Look for" field and change the check boxes so only "Price" is selected.
6. Click *OK*. The Multiple Search Conditions dialog will appear; select *And*. (We want all the CD-ROMs that are "Sports & Recreation" *and* are less than \$50.)

When the browse window appears, it will contain all the CD-ROMs in the database that fulfilled both conditions.

Here's another example, this time using the *Or* option. We'll show you how to find all the CD-ROMs that cost less than \$100 or are "General Information" CDs.

1. Click *CD-ROMs* in the main window to display the search dialog.
2. Enter *"\*info\*"* in the "Look for" field and change the check boxes so only "Category" is selected.

3. Click *OK*. This search will find every CD-ROM that has "info" somewhere in its category name-- in other words, all the "General Information" CDs. (If you had already done a search, select *New* from the Multiple Search Conditions dialog.)
4. When the browse window appears, click on *Search...* to redisplay the search dialog.
5. This time, enter "<100" in the "Look for" field and change the check boxes so only "Price" is selected.
6. Click *OK*. The Multiple Search Conditions dialog will appear; select *Or*. (We want all the CD-ROMs that are "General Information" CDs *or* are less than \$100.)

You don't have to stop with just two conditions. You can continue to add conditions as many times as you like. This allows you a great deal of flexibility in your searching.

## Searching Tips

Extracting the information you want from a database is something of an art. Once you get the hang of it, you'll find locating the CD you want is very easy.

One trick that is especially useful is to use a very broad search to begin with, then continually narrow down your search using the *And* or *Not* search merge functions. Use the *And* to keep records you know you want, and use *Not* to eliminate records you know you *don't* want.

Be careful with the search fields. If you include a field that you don't really need to look in, you might get some surprises. For example, searching for "A\*" in the CD-ROMs database will give you everything beginning with "A", if you have just *Titles* selected for searching. If you select *Titles* and *Platform*, though, you will not only match all the *titles* that begin with "A", but also any *platform* types that start with "A". This includes the "Apple Macintosh", so you'd get all the Mac titles as well as the "A" titles. So pay attention to which fields you've told CoC to look in, it makes a big difference!

Some of CoC's searching facilities are not immediately obvious. If you would like to display all the CD-ROM titles available from a certain publisher, here's how you'd do it. Click *CD-ROMs...* in the main window. (You're looking for CD-ROMs, not publishers.) Click the "Look in" check boxes until only *Publisher* is selected. Now enter the name of the publisher you want in the "Look for" box. Using wildcards is permissible, of course. Now click on *OK*. CoC will look through the *Businesses* database to find any publishers that match the string you entered; then it will look through the CD-ROMs database to find all of the titles from those publishers. (It will still be a very fast search, though.)

You can bring up detailed information on a CD-ROM's publisher in a similar way. Click on *Businesses...* in the main window. (You're looking for a business, not a CD-ROM title.) Click the "Look in" boxes until only *Titles* is selected. Enter the name of the title (or a wildcard) in the "Look for" box and click *OK*. CoC will find all the CD-ROM titles that match the string you entered, then find the publishers for all of them.

# Glossary of Terms

CoC

RAM

Search Dialog

VGA



## **CoC**

CD-ROM of CD-ROMs

# **RAM**

Random Access Memory

## **Search Dialog**

User interface to search for a specific item

# **VGA**

Video Graphics Adapter

