

Library Helper

Version 2.1

AbsolutelyFreeWare.. send no money.. no salesman will call

By Galen Babcock

About Library Helper

Our local Macintosh user group (MacWichita) makes a public domain disk available each month on a "Disk of the Month" basis. Of course some of the public domain applications and files are lacking in documentation, and some of the members like to pick and choose from the public domain library, selecting one or two files from one months disk, one or two from another, etc. to fill up the one disk that they bring in. Consequently, much of the time at our monthly meeting is spent answering questions about how to use the files on the public domain disks.

In an effort to solve this problem, I created **Library Helper** which is designed so that it should be placed on each "Disk of the Month". I purposely designed **Library Helper** so that it could easily be customized (via ResEdit) to suit any local Mac user group.

Essentially, **Library Helper's** purpose is twofold.. to describe the contents of the files on the public domain disk (what type of file it is, what it does, brief descriptions of how to use it, etc.) and also to provide information about the user group such as where and when meetings are held, how much are dues, who is the contact person, and so forth.

Here is a screen dump of a portion of the main screen of **Library Helper**:



In this example, the user has selected "**Get Info About...**" **This Disk**, and then selected a file with the subject name of "Graphics" from the mini-finder. The scrollable portion of the window displays the names of the files on the disk that fall into the "Graphics" category, what type of file it is (ie, Application, MacPaint doc, MacDraw doc, etc.), and brief instructions of how to use it if no documentation is available.

The user also has the option to "Get Info About..." Our Club, in which case he or she will be presented with an alert dialog window displaying a picture. A portion of the dialog box looks like this:

PICT Resource 301

Whatever is in this 6" by 3" PICT is displayed via an ALERT when the user presses the button to get info about the club.

We (MacWichita) use this resource to display a map to our meeting place, and text describing our meeting times, club dues, where the library disks can be found (local dealers), and a contact person name and phone number for further information.

Use ResEdit to copy this resource, paste into MacDraw for editing, and then paste back into 'Library Helper'

Ok

Customizing Library Helper

There are 5 places where Library Helper should be customized for each user group. Customization is done with ResEdit in the usual fashion.

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| PICT #300 | This PICT resource is displayed in the upper left corner of the main window display. We use it to display our club logo, of course you can use it for whatever you like. Using ResEdit, "copy" the PICT resource, quit ResEdit and launch MacDraw. Remove all the text from the PICT and replace it with whatever you wish. "Select All" of the MacDraw document elements, "Copy" them, launch ResEdit, and "Paste" the revised picture from the clipboard into Library Helpers PICT resource list. Be sure to delete the old PICT #300, and also be certain that the new one you've created has the resource ID of 300 by using the "Get Info" menu item of ResEdit and numbering it as 300. |
| PICT #301 | This PICT resource is displayed in the alert dialog window. Edit in the same fashion as above. We use this PICT to display a map of our meeting place, information about date and time of meetings, contact person and telephone number as well as mailing address, and our dues. |
| CNTL #402 | This is the "Our Club" button on the main window. Use ResEdit to change the control title from "Our Club" to your club name. If your club name doesn't fit in the button rectangle, use ResEdit to make the button wider by changing the "right" parameter (making it a larger number). However, if you change the button width, do so also on the other CNTL resource #401 so that the 2 buttons displayed in the main window will "line up" horizontally. |
| STR #300 | The disk number. |
| STR #301 | The month for which that month is the "Disk of the Month". |

Creating "Disk Info" Files

The text description displayed in the scrollable area is taken from a text file. The file is still in the form of a text file, but the file type and file creator have been changed so that double clicking a "Disk Info File" from the desktop will launch **Library Helper** and display that file, and also so that when the user selects "Get Info About... This Disk", the only files presented to the user via the mini-finder are the Disk Info Files.

Use any text editor or word processor to create the text file for each file category (taking care to save the file as "Text Only"). It works best if carriage returns are placed **only after the name and type of file, and two carriage returns at the end of each file description**. I've found the MockWrite Desk Accessory from CE Software most easily facilitates this type of file creation. Once the text file is created and saved to disk, use the application **Library File Maker** to convert Text files to Disk Info Files and vice versa. I've included in this package two sample Disk Info Files for you to examine if this description is not clear.

Please let me know of any problems or bugs you might encounter in using Library Helper, write me at:

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