

Collect Overview!

Collect! is a system that allows you to work with collections of any sort. Webster's Dictionary defines a collector as ***"one who collects or accumulates for hobby or investment."*** The straightforward database portion of Collect! allows you to work in the **hobby** (i.e. cataloguing) frame of mind whereas the financial portion allows for study of **investment** strategy.

Collect! allows you to "program" your own collection information by use of templates. In this manner you can define not only what to record, but how. Collect! comes with pre-defined templates for 15 different types of collections, or simply create your own. In addition, Collect! supports additional text note files and binary files such as graphics, pictures, and sound. Included for your reference is a sample database collection, ANTIQUES.CWF, which you may **OPEN**.

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Getting Started With Collect

To create your own collection, simply follow these easy steps:

1) Select **Create A New Database File** from the Collect! opening selection screen or select **FILE | NEW** from the **Main Menu**.

2) From the **Create A New Database File** screen, either select an existing template to base your collection on, or select **{blank}** to start from scratch.

3) Collect! will want you to name your file. Be sure and use a standard 8.3 filename with the extension **.CWF** on the end.

4) The **Edit Template** screen will now load. If you based your collection on a existing template, the screen will already have information filled in. Create or modify your template as necessary as detailed in the [Creating and Using Templates](#) section.

That's all there is to it! You are now ready to start adding records. After you have entered in a few pieces of information in the first few records, **SAVE** the file. From then on, when you want to work with this collection, choose **OPEN**.

Creating and Using Templates

Description:

A template defines the name of each data field and how it is used -- i.e. text or numeric information. This allows you to modify Collect! for working with any collection. There are eight data fields and a pick list that you can define. The pick list should contain the major categorization for each collection.

Creating Individual Data Fields:

In the text box for each data field, enter the name of the field. Use as descriptive a name as possible and keep it to 35 characters or less. There is no need to use overly terse abbreviations. Choose whether the data is text or numeric. Data fields that you have not entered data into are not used.

Design note: for appearance, try to group the data fields together. If you are only using 4 data fields, try using 4 together in a group rather than having odd spacing between them.

Creating a Pick List:

Beneath the pick list is a text box. Use this to name the list as you would a data field as described above. To add items to the list, type in the text you wish to add in the text box above the list. Choose ADD. The new item will be added to the bottom of the list. Collect! does not support inserting a new item in a specified position. To delete, choose the item from the list. Choose DELETE.

The best way to use a pick list is to use it for a data group of finite size. For instance, the sample antiques data file uses the pick list to define design. There are only so many designs. Similarly, the sample movies template uses it to define the genre. You wouldn't want to use it to list directors, however, because the list is changing daily. The pick list should be used for those categories that are fixed over a long period of time. After all, the whole idea is to save you time.

Choosing Collection Type:

Hobby:

Some collections are oriented to a hobby status only, and financial data is either unimportant or not required. You may disable any financial record-keeping by choosing the **Hobby** option: in edit/view mode of any data file, the *Price Paid* and *Current Value* fields will be hidden and the statistics button will be disabled.

Investment:

Choosing the **Investment** option allows financial data to be recorded. If you are a dealer or have a collection (such as baseball cards) where you have multiples of a given item, you can check the **Use Quantities** check box. In the edit/view mode of a data file, this will show an extra pair of text boxes (QTY and TOTAL) alongside the *price* and *value* text boxes.

Fixed Data Fields

In addition to the eight alphanumeric user-defined data fields and the user-defined pick list, there are four other data fields that cannot be renamed. All but one have limited user programmability.

The unchanging field is **Addendum Name**. This field is used for holding the name of the text, graphic and sound files associated with a data record. If there is no name in this field, the text, graphic and sound buttons are disabled. See Addendum Data Field for more details.

The **Condition/Class** field is used to hold data relevant to the condition, class, or rating of data items. It can be user programmed for the type of collection. Stamp collectors may use the term "mint" whereas "mint" is irrelevant for other collections. Movie buffs may use this to contain a 4 or 5 star rating system, for instance. This field, unlike the rest, can not be custom tailored to each collection. All collections use the same data in this field. You can modify the Condition file by selecting **Options | Edit Condition File** or you may do it manually by editing the **CONDIT.ION** file in **Notepad**.

The Price Paid and Current Value fields are used to hold financial data in a floating point format (and therefore not specific to the U.S.) If the template being used was tagged as hobby-only, both of these fields will be hidden. If the template is tagged for investment, both fields are used. If the **quantities** item is checked, two additional fields are presented -- *quantity* and *total*. The *quantity* field contents are used to multiply the *value* field contents and placed in the *total* field. You may not edit the *total* field.

Addendum Data Field

Data other than the normal data fields may also be used. If the *Addendum Name* field has a valid filename (with no extension) the addendum access buttons are enabled. On the button bar these are labeled Text, Graphics, and Sound.

These data fields allow you to record binary or text data and attach it to any individual data record.

Some collections are not 'traditional' collections like coins. For example, a bird watcher may want to use the data fields to categorise different aspects of a bird; the sound button would access a WAV file of the birdcall, and the graphics button could access a 256 color picture of the bird.

Homeowners with stiff insurance needs may want to use the sound storage capability to prove that something (let's say an old Edison phonograph, for instance) that was destroyed in fact worked. The graphic storage can be varied as well, such as in this case a digitized closeup photo of a serial number or a special marking that increases the value of something.

Done right, the addendum data can be invaluable in creating very unique catalogues.

Statistics and Financial Analysis

The statistics button accesses the statistics window, which uses the *price paid* and *current value* field data. Calculations include an appraisal of what was paid for the items in the current data file, what their value is, and how the item currently shown stacks up in comparison. In addition you are shown a graph that compares price and value to either the condition or picklist field. In this manner you can spot trends.

The graph can be copied to the system clipboard for use in other programs. It is saved as a metafile. You may also print it directly. Clicking the text below the graph (or typing H) will cycle through the five graph styles.

This window is not available if **Hobby** was chosen in the template being used; selecting **Hobby** precludes the use of price and value fields.

Searching For Data

Clicking the Search button or selecting **New Search** from the **Find** menu will bring up the search window. To enter criteria for a search, click one of the checkboxes.

If a numeric field is being searched upon, select the type of search and then enter the data in the text box. (You will see two text entry boxes for range.) Text fields are searched as match only, and there is a checkbox to indicate if you wish to ignore letter case.

You may search on as many or as few fields as you wish using this method. Each field that is "activated" for a search will have the corresponding checkbox left selected. You can also change your mind: choose any selected field to de-select it, and choose it again if you want to re-enter search criteria.

When you have finished determining what you wish to search for, click the search button to initiate the search. If there are records that fall within your selected bounds, you will see information showing how many records you "found."

What To Do With "Found" Data

Collect! offers many possibilities of how to process data found in a search. The FIND menu contains the file operations **copy** and **move**. Essentially, **copy** will make a copy of the found data and append it to a new or existing file. **Move** will remove the data from the current file and append it to a new or existing file.

You can also print this data, or **export** it in a comma-delimited format readable by most standard database products. If you are sending information to another party and are unsure what database they are working with then exporting is the safest method.

File Management

File management is an essential part of managing a collection, since it allows you to subdivide or unify collections in new ways. As your collection grows, your tastes and interests may change. Good file management also allows you to share data with others who are working with database software.

Example:

Bonnie collects antiques, and specialises in Victorian purses. Recently she has been acquiring more purses than anything else, and her collection of purses is impressive in it's own right. In fact, the more purses she obtains, the more varied she realizes the field really is. Bonnie creates a new template specifically for her purses, and then searches the original file for purses. She then **moves** the found data (purses) from the original file to a new file. In this manner Bonnie has created a new sub-category from an original file to reflect her new needs.

File management allows more flexibility than might otherwise be apparent.

Another aspect of Collect! file management is exporting data. Sometimes you may wish to send data via modem or disk to another, and you're not sure what software that the recipient has. In that case you can export whole files or parts of a file in a comma delimited standard database format.

Drag and Drop Capabilities

Drag and drop refers to the ability to select something by mouse and dragging it somewhere else to cause a unique action. Collect! supports the following drag and drop actions:

1. Individual data fields can be erased by dragging them to the garbage can.
2. Records can be erased by dragging the "index card" icon (within the **File Info** section) to the garbage can.
3. The clipboard can be loaded by dragging "index card" icon to the clipboard button.

These drag and drop actions are intended to make certain actions faster. The mouse cursor will always change to a **HAND** when something can be dragged.

Printing Collection Data

Collect offers various printing options. Printing can span data records and/or statistical information. Data can be printed on paper or to a data file.

Formats of printing:

Normal -- one data field per line, mask can be used, field names are included, also includes ability to print graphic and text addendum files. THIS IS THE ONLY OPTION THAT ALLOWS YOU TO PRINT ADDENDUM FILES. See Addendum Data Fields

Two Column -- two records side by side on the page, uses the mask.

To File -- same as two column format except written to disk.

What can be printed:

Current record -- normal format

All records -- normal format, two column format, file format

Records from last search -- normal format, two column format, file format

Statistics and **Statistics from last search** -- normal format

In addition, the **SPEED PRINT** button allows you to choose two significant descriptor data fields and either PRICE or VALUE to create a quick listing. This allows you to create a simple list of items that you have for sale or want to trade for, etc. Careful use of the two descriptor fields will allow for a reasonable description, as shown below:

Victorian	Clock, grandfather	1,233.00
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The **Print Header** option will print a line at the top of the first page as an identifier, such as "Moseley's Collectibles Shop -- Current Specials" and so on.

The print mask is simply a checkoff list of the data fields; you can place a check on any data fields that you do NOT want printed. In printing an availability catalogue it is not likely that you'll want to have the potential customer read the price you paid for something, so you would check off the **PRICE PAID** field, and in the printing Window check off **USE MASK**.

Specifications

Data and data files:

Number of records per data file -- 10,000
Number of possible data files -- unlimited
Number of possible templates -- unlimited
Maximum allowable characters per data field -- 35
Maximum allowable characters for a field name -- 35
Number of items in a picklist -- 5000

Data record addenda:

Text addendum max size -- 30,000 bytes
Graphic addendum maximum colors -- 256
Graphic addendum allowable formats to read -- , RLE, ICO, WMF, BMP
Graphic addendum save format -- BMP
Graphic addendum max size -- not limited
Sound file format -- WAV
Sound file max size -- not limited

Statistics:

Maximum currency limit -- 100 Million
Graph format saved to clipboard -- WMF (metafile)

