

3x3 Labeler

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Introduction

Overview

3x3 Labeler produces labels for 3 ½" diskettes. This program supports the Avery 5196, which contains three rows of three labels each on an 8 ½" by 11" page, suitable for a laser or inkjet printer. Each label can contain file names, directory names, or multi-line text. Each label can have different fonts, sizes and edge/banner text, or can use the default global values.

Installation

3x3 Labeler is distributed as a .ZIP file. Unzip this file into the directory of your choice. To run, select 3x3.EXE from your shell or desktop.

This program is written in Visual Basic, and requires the run-time library VBRUN300.DLL. It's included on the registered version disk.

Quick Instructions

Turn on label preview by clicking in the Preview box. Select your 3 ½" drive using the drop-down drive list. Insert a diskette into the drive. Click on one of the diskette icons in the 3x3 grid to select a label to work with. This grid corresponds to the 3x3 label format. After selecting a label, you can edit the label information or read the diskette's contents by pressing the Edit or Read buttons, respectively.

When the program has read the contents of the diskette, the diskette icon changes to a diskette icon with an 'F' or 'D' on the label. You can change the default edge text, banner text, body type and contents, fonts and sizes for the selected label by pressing the Edit button. Repeat this process for up to 9 diskettes. Press the Print button to send the information to the default printer. Press the Wipe button to revert the icons and reset to the default values, or use the Clear button to clear just the selected label.

It is not necessary to use all nine labels in each pass. Since you can specify which label to read a disk to, you can print some now and some later. We've had the best luck on partial pages by doing the "bottom" labels first.

Banner text will print above the contents listing. Edge text will print above the banner, and will be on the edge of the diskette when the label is properly applied. These options can be saved in 3x3.INI by using the Defaults/Save option.

WARNING: Printing label pages in multiple passes may violate the warranty of your laser printer. Consult your laser printer manual or manufacturer for further information. Mileon Software assumes no responsibility for any damage incurred by the use of 3x3 Labeler.

Command Buttons

Diskette Label Selection

There are nine diskette buttons, in a 3x3 grid. Each button corresponds to a label on the Avery 5196 page. Press one of these buttons to select the label to work with.. This button can have three states. The non-selected cleared state, is represented by a standard picture of a 3 ½" disk. When a button is selected, the icon changes to a diskette with a red asterisk . After the diskette file names have been read, the icon changes to the 3x3 icon. In the icon, the area of the label body will contain an 'F' to indicate the diskette contains filenames , a 'D' to indicate directory names , or a 'T' to indicate text .

Drive Listbox

This box should point to your 3 ½" drive. The drive initially points to C:, but you can change the default by changing the drive, then saving the defaults using the menu selection Defaults/Save. When you next run 3x3 Labeler, the drive listbox will point to your 3 ½" drive, but only if you have a disk in the drive when you start 3x3 Labeler. This appears to be a Visual Basic quirk.

Selected Buttons

Read

Read reads the diskette's contents into the selected label. The current disk drive is used for the read operation.. File or directory names are organized in three columns and up to twenty rows, for a total of 60 names.

Edit

Edit allows you to change the edge text, alignment, font and size, banner text, alignment, font and size, divider style, body style, text, alignment, font and size for the selected label. If the selected label is using the default global edge or banner text, the radio button to the right of the text will be selected. When you change the edge or banner text, the global button will clear. If you turn on either global button, the default text will replace the existing box contents. All text boxes will show the text in the selected font and size. The file pattern text box can be used to specify which file names appear on the label, and is active when the Files button is selected. This box can contain more than one file pattern, separated by a semi-colon (for example, *.EXE;*.COM to read just the executable filenames). This box can also contain a directory file pattern or body text. After changing the pattern, you must reread the diskette, if you've already read it. Reset will reset the selected label to the current global defaults.

NOTE: The edge and banner text boxes are as wide as the label. Therefore, any text that does not fit in the text box will stretch beyond the label, possibly into the next label to the right. For best results, always make sure your edge and banner text fits into the boxes. This can easily be done using the label preview.

Clear

Clear deletes any information associated with the selected label, including any edge or banner text. The selected label is then loaded with the global default values.

Preview

Preview toggles the label preview window. This window deserves special explanation. It is hard-coded to the size of an individual Avery label. The contents of the label preview are updated when exiting the Edit box, after Reading the contents of a diskette, and when selecting a different label.

All Buttons

Print

Print prints the diskette file information to a page of labels. The default printer should be online, in portrait mode, with labels loaded. Each press of this button will print one page of labels.

Wipe

Wipe resets the Diskette button icons to show an "empty" diskette. All information about diskette contents are cleared and reset to global values.

Menu Options

File

Exit

This option exits the 3x3 Labeler.

Defaults

Label

This option allows you to specify the default label contents. For further information, refer to the command button Edit.

Margins

The margin option allows you to fine-tune label placement to your particular printer. As the top value increases, the text moves down on the page. As the left value increases, the text moves right on the page. All values are in TWIPS, which are 1440/inch, or 20/point. The margin control allows up to a half-inch adjustment in any direction.

Save

This option saves the default drive, label options, and margins to the 3x3.INI file. Next time 3x3 is started, these defaults are used. Due to a quirk in Visual Basic's drive listbox, 3x3 will change to the floppy drive only if it has a disk in it.

Help

Contents

This option runs the Windows Help program with 3x3.HLP.

About

This option shows the About box, containing the program name, version number and other information.

Troubleshooting

Unexpected Error: Quitting

This error occurs when first running 3x3. The VB guys at Microsoft said it wasn't their error. The Windows guys at Microsoft identified it as a VB error message indicating an incorrect version of a custom control. Search for THREEED.VBX and MHGTX.VBX. Delete any older copies. Should cure it.

Fonts in Label Preview

If the contents of the body area are unreadable, set the font size smaller. I've noticed that some fonts, rather than "overprint" stuff, kind of get lost and put garbage on the screen. Lowering the font size a point or two should fix it. This is good reason to use label preview.

Printer Errors

These generally go under the heading of "Clueless". The VB manual has one kind of printer error. In these circumstances, the software calls AbortDoc, which should flush the page. One thing to try is check the free space on the drive pointed to by the TEMP environment variable. Generally, this is the hard disk but may point to a RAM disk. This drive should have 1.5Mb of free space to hold the spool file. If problem persists, call us.

Defaults

Can't seem to get new default values to take effect? After you change the default label options, save them. Then press the Wipe button. This will apply the new defaults to all labels.

Alignment Problems

Several tricks can be used to obtain perfect alignment. 3x3 prints two horizontal lines on the label, between rows 1 and 2 and rows 2 and 3. Vertically, this line should be directly between the two rows. Horizontally, it should align exactly with the middle column of labels.

Another trick is to apply the labels to the diskette face first. We get good results by placing the lower-left corner of the label onto the diskette, then align the bottom of the label to the bottom of the diskette label area. Everything then seems to align when the label top is wrapped to the back of the diskette.

Future Features

Filename Columns

This version will auto-adjust the number of columns based on the number of files or directories to be printed. If there is any interest, the user could specify the column layout or the filenames could be split into name and extension, similar to a DOS DIR command output.

Banner Text

Banner text could be enhanced in several ways. High on the priority list is the ability to print the banner text upside down above the edge text, so it will wrap to the back of the diskette and provide a label on that side. This is a major enhancement, and will appear in version 2.0.

Another option under consideration is auto-sizing of the banner text to fit all the way across the label, with centering. Probably 2.0 for this enhancement.

One major feature would allow you to use a .BMP bitmap containing a company logo, for instance. This enhancement would include the ability to print the bitmap upside down for the back side label. This enhancement should also make it into 2.0.

Diskette Cataloging

Yes, this is also in the works. Your feedback here is appreciated...What kind of information should it capture? Filenames, sizes, dates? Banner or edge text? Searchable by any field? From 3x3, or from a separate (included) program?

This option is the main reason the next version will get a whole new revision level. Plus, it will give us an opportunity to try out VB 3's database engine, and more custom controls.

Other Enhancements

There has been some interest in printing a directory tree of the diskette instead of the columns of filenames. Feedback?.

The next version will use a standard Setup program, to allow easier distribution of all of the related files.

Any interest in this same program, but for labels for 5 ¼" floppies instead? It couldn't have edge text, but could have more than 3 columns of files.

User Interface

Feedback on the user interface will be appreciated. We've tried to make a program that performs with minimum mouse clicks and keystrokes, while still being easy to learn and use. Have we succeeded? Any changes we should make?

Legalese

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Revision History