

HyperDA version 1.1

by Kathy Marshall

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Like most of you, the main reason I purchased a MAC was to take advantage of its unmatched graphic and text interface capabilities. My husband and I have primarily been using HyperCard for our graphics and "The Works" for word processing, spreadsheet and database applications. While we have just touched the surface of HyperCard's magic, we already know that it's an application we'll be using often.

To incorporate graphics in my Microsoft "Works" word processing documents, I used to develop all of the text; then save the document; quit Works; open HyperCard; open the appropriate stacks; copy all of the needed graphics into the scrapbook; quit HyperCard; reopen Works; reopen my document; and paste the graphics into the document. Needless to say, this was a terribly laborious process, and frustrating when additional graphics had to be transferred from HyperCard. My Mac SE (with a 45 megabyte CMS hard drive) only has one megabyte of RAM, so fully using Multifinder is unfortunately not possible. Imagine my joy when Helen Adams' November 1988 solicitation for software reviewers included Symmetry Corporation's HyperDA 1.1--I called right away to get the software!

What is HyperDA? HyperDA is a HyperCard stack "browser". You can look through stacks, and even copy text or graphic information from a card in any stack. Best of all, HyperDA can be accessed while working in any application program; thus, HyperDA allows multiple programs to be opened at the same time--very similar to Multifinder's capabilities.

HyperDA is different from HyperCard in the following ways:

- It's biggest limitation is that you can't alter the stack; you can only browse, cut/copy, paste, phone dial, etc.;
- HyperDA has two modes: the regular "card" mode, and a "window" mode that puts the stack into a window. The latter allows you to leave a stack on the screen but still get back to your application's window. It's pretty easy to toggle between the two modes, and it is possible to scale down the HyperDA and application windows to view both on the screen at the same time;
- The HyperDA menubar always remains visible, along with the application's regular menus.

The HyperDA 1.1 package lists for \$69 and contains a 32-page User's Manual, 3 1/2" diskette, a list of Symmetry products, and a registration card. It requires a minimum 512K Macintosh, Finder, HyperCard and another application program.

I quickly scanned the Table of Contents--introduction, tutorial, references, appendices--and then began reading from the beginning, like a thorough evaluator should. The manual uses large, bold-face type along with icons, pictures, and normal-font text to aptly communicate its contents.

The instructions for installing the program were clear, and extremely easy to follow. Once installed, I opened a new word processing document from the "Works"; opened HyperDA from the Apple menu; opened the HyperDA Manual file which I located in my HyperCard folder; and began using the well-prepared, computerized tutorial. About 15 minutes had passed since first opening the package and I became impatient to actually paste some HyperCard graphics into my word processing document. I decided to use my common sense and intuition to see how easy the program was to use. It was amazingly easy to transfer card information once I found out how to select a graphic: hold down the option key down to get the crosshairs cursor; click and drag the mouse to select a given object; copy the graphic to the clipboard; and paste the information into the word processing file.

The tutorial describes how to open and use stacks, copy a picture and/or text, use the window mode, "peek" at buttons, use the find command, close the stack, and quit HyperDA. I thought the computerized version was easier to use because of its interactive nature. The reference section covers the previous functions in more depth, in addition to providing information on moving through a stack, going "home", using the message box, printing cards, phone dialing, and describing all HyperDA menu functions. The appendices contain information on installing the system, keyboards commands, and supported HyperTalk commands.

Conclusion: HyperDA is an excellent tool for accessing, copying and printing HyperCard stack information from application programs. The extent to which you need to modify stack information will justify its relatively low cost. Anyone who knows the rudiments of navigating through HyperCard should have little trouble working with HyperDA 1.1.

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