

The way I collect Comics

%oric Simenel

First and foremost, I collect comic books, comics in short, to READ them. I'm not too impressed with their financial value, as are some other collectors (or should I say investors).

Nonetheless, since I now possess more than 22,000 comics, and hate buying duplicates when I parse hundreds of boxes at conventions, I wrote a comics database management application back in '85 (on a Mac 512K). This application is NOT a product for other users, hence the lack of richness in most criteria; its tailor-custom made for my needs. If you have other needs, write your own, or modify mine; I wont accept any suggestions..

The criteria I'm using for the titles are the brand [Marvel, DC, Other] (since I'm not buying a lot of comics from other companies than Marvel or DC, I didn't really feel like supplying a user interface for adding and dealing with other companies); the nature of the series: **mini** (defined from the start to run a limited number of issues) or **long** (hopefully, from the editor point of view, a title which will never cease publication); the kind: **main** (an ongoing weekly, biweekly, monthly, bimonthly or quarterly published title) or **dual** (an annual or special issue related to the main title but published irregularly); and the state: **live** (ongoing) or **dead** (publication ceased).

Each title also has a name and an abbreviation for which I'm using my own codification: 3 uppercase characters, then an optional number if that's the second (or third or ¼) run of a title, and an optional letter a (annual), g (giant-sized), y (yearly), etc. for a dual title (i.e. ^aFFR^o for ^aThe Fantastic Four^o, ^aASMa^o for ^aThe Amazing Spider-Man annual^o, ^aSVS3^o for the 3rd run of ^aThe Silver Surfer^o).

The criteria I'm using for the issues are the grade: **missing** (I don't

have it^{1/4} yet^{1/4}), **poor**, **good**, **fine**, or **mint** (everything labeled missing, poor or good has to be bought or rebought^{1/4}); the type: **comics** (standard format, standard paper), **new format** (standard format, better kind of paper), **lux**e (standard format, high-quality glossy paper) or **magazine** (over-sized, usually black and white); and the nature of the content: **story** (99% of my collection), **reprint** (an issue which is a reprint of a previous issue), or **information** (not really a story, in most cases, textual information about characters).

Each issue also has a number (`issueNumber`) which must be positive but may be 0 (a lot of companies like issuing #0 issues), the month it was edited (`editMonth`), and the month I bought it (`buyMonth`) or -1 if its missing.

In the Verify window list, a title run is, for example, displayed like ^a1-66, 94-345^o, meaning that I have all issues between 1 and 66 (included), and all the issues between 94 and 345 (also included).

To have better focused displays, I maintain 4 variables `startEditMonth` (the lowest edit month), `lastEditMonth` (the highest edit month), `startBuyMonth` (the lowest buy month, I started in August 78) and `lastBuyMonth` (the highest buy month, usually the current month).

For historical (and weird) reasons, comics, mainly from Marvel and DC, which you buy on, say, May '97 show the edit month of July '97. Back a few years ago, comics you would buy on, say, May '80 would show the edit month of September '80. Back in end of '88 for DC, and end of '89 for Marvel, both companies introduced 2 virtual edit months to catch up a little bit on this crazy scheme. Why they never completed this effort so that a comics bought in May would show an edit month of May (like most other companies) is beyond me.

The difference between a title longevity (count 1 per month between the edit month of the first published issue and the edit month of the latest published issue) and the number of comics edited per month

comes from the fact that not all titles have a regular one issue per month publication. Both displays are interesting (for me, in any case).

The Calendar window enables me to spot any late or missing issue at a single glance. That's why a quarterly published title has a display like "8€8€8€9€9€9¼". If it was "8€€€€€9€€€€¼" it would be more difficult to distinguish between really missing issues (a blank cell) and non-monthly published issues.

The Input window is aimed at quick database updating when I just bought my weekly load. Although you can create or modify any issue number for any edit month or buy month, it is designed to quickly enter the next issue of a run (grabbing all the criteria from the previous last issue of this run).

If you click on an empty cell in the 6 rows where issue numbers are displayed, you can only choose an issue number close to the last issue number of the run, the default choice being the last issue number plus 1. If you select an already existing issue number, this particular issue will take the edit month corresponding to the column of the clicked cell, and will transfer (easier to do it than to explain it, try it¼).

If you click on a non-empty cell, you can either modify the edit month of the selected issue (shown in the popup menu with a starting ^{a>>°}) and transfer to another edit month, or select another issue published the same month (any issue number starting with only ^{a>°}) since there may be more than one issue of the run published on that month (for example, go to the 600-640 run of ^{aAction Comics°} by using the Edit Month slider to see this), or add a new issue the same way as previously described.

You can also delete the selected issue, and in both popups, select the ^{aOther...°} menu item to type in the issue number (only for creating, much too dangerous otherwise).

If you click on a cell in the Issue column, then the Edit Month will slide if necessary to display this issue.

Whenever you add or modify an issue number, the Buy Month (displayed in the upper right) will be used. You can adjust it by using the provided slider.