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Overview

Auto Analyst is a program designed to track maintenance, gasoline, insurance and general information for your automobiles. This easy to use program will allow you to enter your vehicle maintenance information and track when maintenance may be due. The maintenance this way is tracked by mileage and date. Maintenance can be completed according to miles or months. This program also keeps a record of your gasoline fill-ups. This will show how many miles, gallons and dollars are being used. If you keep regular gasoline transactions, the program will keep a running average of Miles-per-Gallon. This may indicate a potential problem with your automobile.

Warranty Disclaimer

I make no claims and offer no warranties of any sort with Auto Analyst. I assume no responsibility for any damage resulting from the apparent or actual use of Auto Analyst. The program provided is not guaranteed as to merchantability or fitness for its ultimate use. The user accepts all responsibility for use and may not resell the program.

Tutorial

Database Creation

Select the file | New on the mainscreen menubar. This will prompt you for the location and database name you wish to create (exp. C:\Data\AutAnl21\AutAnl21.MDB). After you put in a valid name and click OK, the program will build an empty database from scratch.

Automobile Creation

Select the Automobile | Add on the mainscreen menubar. Before the Automobile screen appears, you will be prompted to decide whether you would like the program to build over 80 automotive tasks to be used with this automobile or by not selecting if you would like to create your own tasks. By not selecting, the "Include This Auto in Program Processing" field, you can hide an automobile from the rest of processing if you sell it or rarely update information. If the "Include this Auto in the Startup Check" function field is not selected, this automobile will not be included in the startup check. (See Implementing Startup Maintenance Checking in the help) On the automobile add screen, you must fill-out the automobile name and date purchase fields before saving. The buttons on the right will send you to the other screens used to keep your automotive tasks, insurance and manufacturers recommended information up to date. The automotive tasks screen can define how often each task should be completed (by months or mileage). From this screen, you can add new tasks, modify or delete selected ones, or mark a task not to be checked when performing tasks checks. Also, this screen will note the last time any maintenance detail was performed.

Gasoline Transaction Creation

To add a Gasoline transaction to the database you can either press [Ctrl-G] to take you straight to the gasoline screen or you can click the [Add] button on the bottom of the screen and click [Add Gasoline] on the next prompt. When on the automobile dropdown, you can type the first character of the automobile to select it. If there are more than one vehicle with the same first character, by repeating that first character the program will toggle through all automobiles. When on the date field and there is a valid date in the field you can press '+' to move the date up by 1 day. You can also press '-' to move the date down by 1 day. Complete the information on this screen for all gasoline fill-ups in order to have complete data for analysis purposes in the future. Clicking [Save] on the lower right will validate your data, save it to the database and return you to the main screen. Clicking [Cancel] will not save your changes that you have made on the screen and return you to the main screen. To modify this or any transaction, on the main screen, simply double click on the transaction you wish to modify or select the transaction and click the [Modify] button on the bottom of the screen.

Maintenance Transaction Creation

To add a Maintenance transaction to the database you can either press [Ctrl-M] to take you straight to the maintenance screen or you can click the [Add] button on the bottom of the screen and click [Add Maintenance] on the next prompt. When on the automobile dropdown, you can type the first character of the automobile to select it. If there are more than one vehicle with the same first character, by repeating that first character the program will toggle through all automobiles. When on the date field and there is a valid date in the field you can press '+' to move the date up by 1 day. You can also press '-' to move the date down by 1 day. Complete

the information on this screen for all maintenance performed in order to have complete data for analysis purposes in the future. After you select an automobile from the drop down, the program will show you all available maintenance tasks on the bottom left side of the screen. You can select an item by clicking the [Add] button or double click the item. The selected items will be displayed on the bottom right side of the screen. If you no longer wish to have an item selected, choose the item and click the [Remove] button or double click the item. If you need to create a new maintenance item, click the [Create New] button which will take you to the Maintenance Category Update screen. If you save this maintenance task, it will appear in the Available side of the screen. (Both of the lists are in alphabetical order) If you need to change the automobile after assigning maintenance tasks to this screen, you will need to remove the selected items, change the automobile and then reassign the selected items. To modify this or any transaction, simply double click on the transaction you wish to modify or select the transaction and click the [Modify] button on the bottom of the screen.

Other Transaction Creation

To add an Other transaction to the database you can either press [Ctrl-O] or you can click the [Add] button on the bottom of the screen and click [Add Other] on the next prompt. I created this new transaction type to hold loan/lease payments, insurance payments or other transactions that you would like to track. When on the automobile dropdown, you can type the first character of the automobile to select it. If there are more than one vehicle with the same first character, by repeating that first character the program will toggle through all automobiles. When on the date field and there is a valid date in the field you can press '+' to move the date up by 1 day. You can also press '-' to move the date down by 1 day. To modify this or any transaction, simply double click on the transaction you wish to modify or select the transaction and click the [Modify] button on the bottom of the screen.

File

New

This option creates a new database. Upon selecting, it will prompt you to name the database. Clicking [OK] will start the process, [Cancel] will take you back to the main screen. If you create an invalid name, the program will prompt you to change the name.

Open

This option opens an existing database. You will be prompted for the name of the database. Clicking [OK] will open the database and [Cancel] will take you back to the main screen.

Close

This option closes the current database. You will need to do this if you have a database open and you want to do database maintenance; (Utility | DB Maintenance) on the menubar.

Options

Exit

This option closes down the Auto Analyst application.

Options

Measurements - Allows you to change the conversion method you wish to use (Miles/Gallon or Kilometers/Liter). This function does not make any changes to your database. It only changes text on screens and reports.

MPG Variance % - When you save new gasoline transactions to your database, the program performs a check to see if there is a difference between this transactions MPG compared to the life average MPG. By putting a number in this field, it will prompt you when the difference between the two above numbers is greater than this percentage. If you put a 0 in the field, the program will prompt you unless there is no difference between the numbers. This prompting can alert you to changes in your MPG which could be telling you of a possible problem.

Automobile

Add (Ctrl - A)

This option displays the automobile add screen. Before the screen appears, you will be prompted to decide if you want the program to create a startup set of automotive tasks. On this screen, you can complete any of the information requested. By clicking the buttons on the right side, you can access the automotive tasks, insurance screen, or manufacturers recommended screen.

Modify

This option will access a selection screen which will allow you to select the automobile you would like to modify.

Delete

This option will access a selection screen which will allow you select the automobile you would like to delete from your database. This process will completely delete the automobile along with its associated transactions. (Once deleted these records cannot be restored.)

Data Analysis

Select the Automobile and click the [Process] button to perform various calculations on your data. The Loan/Lease box makes calculations based on all of the information on the main automobile screen. You can change these values using Automobile | Modify on the main screen menubar. The Gasoline box makes calculations based on all of the gasoline transactions for this automobile. There is also a cost analysis portion on the bottom that will determine the cost of ownership.

Maintenance Check

Select the Automobile and click the [Process] button to check for maintenance items that are past due by mileage or months. If there are any past due maintenance items for any of the selected automobiles, they will appear in the list on the screen. You can place a check mark in the Mileage Prompt field to prompt you for the current mileage. The Pad Days field will allow you to check days into the future. (Ex. 30 - Would tell you if anything would come due in the next 30 days) The Pad Mileage field will allow you to check miles in the future instead of checking the current date. (Ex. 3,000 - Would tell you if anything would come due in the next 3,000 miles instead of checking the current mileage)

Transactions

Add Gasoline (Ctrl - G)

This option brings up the gasoline add screen.

Add Maintenance (Ctrl - M)

This option brings up the maintenance add screen.

Add Other (Ctrl - O)

This option brings up the other add screen.

Modify (Ctrl - F)

This option brings up the selected record in the gasoline, maintenance or other screen from the record type.

Delete (Ctrl - D)

This option prompts you with the record that you have selected to verify that you want it deleted. By clicking [Yes], the transaction will be deleted from the database. (Once deleted this record cannot be restored.)

Reporting

Reports

Enter all of the needed information and click the [Print Preview] button. On the print preview screen, the [<<] button will take you to the first page of the report. The [<] button will take you to the previous page from the page that you are currently on. The [>] button will take you to the next page from the page that you are currently on. The [>>] button will take you to the last page of the report. The button that has three different sizes of boxes on it when clicked will toggle through a full page, partial page and close-up display. To print the report click the icon that looks like a printer with a piece of paper coming out the top of it. The button that looks like a suitcase when clicked will bring up a dialog box that will allow you to export the report to many file types. The button that looks like an envelope with a paperclip above it when clicked will bring up a dialog which will allow you to Email your report. The [Close] button will close down the report preview window and return back to the report parameter screen.

Graphs

Enter all of the needed information and click the [Process] button. Click the [Cancel] button to return back to the graph parameter screen.

Utility

Database Maintenance

This option will compact the database for performance reasons. This process could take a few seconds to a few minutes depending on how much data you have in the database. At the end of the process, you will be advised if the process was completed successfully or not.

** Note: You should perform this function weekly or monthly based on how much you use Auto Analyst.

Upgrading to v2.x

I tried to make the process of upgrading as simple as possible. I recommend you make a backup of the database file even though the program makes a copy naming it [filename.v10]. When you open up the version 1.x database, my program will prompt you that this database is not the same version as the program. By clicking [YES], it will save your old database file, create a new database file and copy all of your information from the old database to the new database.

I recommend printing out reports of all your data before the conversion from the 1.x version. After upgrading to the new version, print out reports of all your data in the 2.x version. Visually compare both reports checking for any data errors such as missing records or information.

If you have any questions please contact me by Email. If you find a problem with the conversion, please Email me stating what information was a problem. Please attach your old and new database to the Email. If you have any questions about attaching files to your Email feel free to contact me or your online service provider.

Startup Automotive Task Checking

By putting a /C on the command line (C:\Program Files\Auto Analyst v2.0\AutAnl21.exe /C) of an icon you can do a quick check of tasks due. Also, you can put this icon in the startup group of Windows to execute when Windows starts. The program will do a special check for any of the automobiles that are selected to do a startup check. If there are tasks due for any of the vehicles, the program will display on the screen all tasks just like in the automotive task check. If no tasks are due, the program will shut down.

How to Copy the Startup Automotive Task Check icon from Auto Analyst v2.1 folder to the Startup folder

- From the Start menu go to Programs and then Windows Explorer.
- In Windows Explorer on the left side of the screen, you will see the drives and the subdirectories underneath them.
- Double-click the C: drive so that the tree opens up underneath
- Double-click the [Windows] subdirectory so that the tree will open up underneath
- Double-click the [Start Menu] subdirectory so that the tree will open up
- Double-click the [Programs] subdirectory so that the tree will open up
- Double-click the [Auto Analyst v2.1] subdirectory so that the tree will open up
- On the right side of the screen, you will see the files inside of that subdirectory
- Right-click the [Auto Analyst Maintenance Check] file and left-click (Copy) on the menu
- On the left side of the screen, you will see a subdirectory [Startup]. Right-click on the [Startup] subdirectory and left-click (Paste) on the menu

How to create a Startup Automotive Task Check icon in the Startup folder from scratch

- Perform steps 1-6 of the How to Copy above
- Double-click the [Startup] subdirectory so that the tree will open up
- On the right side of the screen, right-click in a white area. Left-click on the (New) and then (Shortcut) on the menu
- In the Create Shortcut wizard for the command line, put "C:\Program Files\Auto Analyst v2.0\AutAnl21.exe /C" (/C has to be uppercase) (Substitute drive and subdirectory to where you installed the software) in the command line and click the [Next] button
- Put "Auto Analyst Maintenance Check" into the Select a name for the shortcut box and press the [Finish] button

How to delete the Startup Automotive Task Check icon in the Startup folder

- Perform steps 1-6 of the how to Copy above
- Double-click the [Startup] subdirectory so that the tree will open up
- On the right side of the screen, right-click on the text "Auto Analyst Maintenance Check" (Or whatever you named it in the create icon above) and left-click the (Delete) on the menu

Automobile Internet Sites

I have taken all of the sites that was on this page and placed them off of my internet site at <http://www.auto-analyst.com>. This makes it easier for you to surf the web, easier for me to keep the links up to date and adding new links in the future. If you haven't seen them yet, I have tried to gather and display every site I can find related to automobiles that might interest someone.

Shopping

Dealer Invoice: This is what the dealer pays initially for the automobile.

List: Manufacturer's suggested retail price (sticker).

Destination Charges: This is the price charged for transporting the automobile from the factory to the dealer. There is no markup and the dealer must pay the manufacturer this amount.

Dealer Holdback: This is what the dealer gets back usually at the end of the year for selling that car to you. Usually, this holdback amount is between two and three percent of the automobile's list price. The dealer could sell the automobile at the dealer invoice and still have quite a bit of money for his profit.

Factory Incentives: These incentives are usually given by the manufacturer to get rid of slow moving vehicles or increase sales when volumes are down. The dealer gets this discount also.

Dealer Charges: The dealer will add equipment (ie. body side moldings, spoilers) to build up the price of the automobile. These are high markup extras and you shouldn't buy them if you don't want them.

Dealer Advertising Charge: Some areas of the country will try to pass the advertising cost on to the customer. You should not have to pay this charge.

As a general rule-of-thumb, if you can buy a vehicle from \$100-\$300 over cost (for the base vehicle + accessories + destination charges) you have a good deal - so does the dealer. He has his holdback and he has his amount "over invoice". His profit is fair and he'll be able to stay in business to service your new vehicle. If there are factory incentives in effect, you should be able to get the full benefit of these incentives after buying the vehicle at \$100-\$300 over cost. The "dealer charges" are another matter. Beware of "supplemental" or dealer generated price stickers. They are usually for high mark-up items that you may not want or need.

Tires

What all of the codes on tires mean

P195/60R15 88H

- The "P" stands for passenger car tire.
- The "195" is the nominal width of the tire's cross section in millimeters.
- The "60" is the aspect ratio which is the ratio of the sidewall's height to the tire's cross-sectional width. This sidewall is 60 percent as high as the tire is wide.
- The "R" stands for radial tire.
- The "15" is the diameter in inches.
- The "88" is a code indicating the maximum weight the tire can carry at its maximum rated speed.
- The "H" is a code indicating the maximum speed that the tire is supposed to sustain with failure. (Q=100MPH / R=106MPH / S=112MPH / T=118MPH / U=124MPH / H=130MPH / V=149MPH / W=168MPH / Y=186MPH)

TREADWARE 340 TRACTION A TEMPERATURE A

- The "340" is a gauge of treadlife based on 100. A treadware rating of 340 means that the tire should last 3.4 times as long as the reference tire. (180 is quite low and 500 is quite high)
- The traction index of "A" is an index of straight-line stopping ability on a wet surface. It does not include testing for wet-corning traction. The scale is from "A" to "C", with "A" being the best, "C" the worst.
- The Temperature index of "A" is an index of a tire's ability to withstand the heat that high speeds, heavy loads, and hard driving generate. The scale is from "A" to "C", with "A" being the best, "C" the worst.

Common Asked Questions

1) What is shareware?

Shareware is a computer software marketing method in which the user has a chance to try the software before buying it (Try-Before-You-Buy). The user can copy the shareware version of the program and install it on his/her computer. After the evaluation period (typically about 4 weeks), if the user decides that he/she likes the program and wants to use it, he/she should register the program by sending the registration fee to the program author.

2) What happens after I register?

After you register I will send you a serial number that you may enter into the program. From this moment, the unregistered shareware reminder screens will not be displayed and the program is not transaction-limited.

3) Is there a printed manual included with your registered version?

No, I do not include any printed documentation. You will only receive a letter with the serial number included. If you have difficulty using the software you may want to read the help message text on the menubar or contact me by Email at (tom1@infinet.com) or by mail at the address on the registration screen.

4) Can I safely enter my data into the unregistered program?

Yes, absolutely. To be on the safe side, however, you should backup your data every once in a while. By default the databases have the extension of "MDB" but you can change it to what ever you would like.

Technical Support

Please take a look through the rest of this help document and especially the Tutorial section. If your question has not been answered, please contact me by Email at toml@infinet.com (preferred) or by mail at the address on the registration screen (Help / Registration). I will try to reply to an Email message within 24 hours. By mail it may take more than a week.

Auto Analyst v2.1 Registration Form

Date: _____
Name/Company: _____
Address: _____
City, State & Zip: _____
Country: _____
Phone: _____ (Optional)
Fax: _____ (Optional)
Email: _____

Can I send your registration number via Email? Yes _____ No _____

Please write any comments or suggestions for enhancement or improvements on the back.

<u>Purchase Invoice</u>	<u>Price U.S.</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Auto Analyst v2.1 for Win 95	\$29.95	_____
Auto Analyst v2.1 for Win 95 Upgrade	\$14.95	_____
Ohio residents please add 5 3/4% sales tax x .0575 (\$1.73/\$.86)		_____
	Total	_____

Please answer the questions below to help me to better serve yourself and others in the future.

Miscellaneous Information

Where did you hear about Auto Analyst?

Internet ___ Friend ___ Magazine ___ CD-ROM ___

Where did you download Auto Analyst?

Internet ___ America Online ___ CompuServe ___ CD-ROM ___ BBS ___

Internet Address: _____ (If applicable) .

Will this program be used for personal or corporate use? Personal ___ Corporate ___

How many vehicles are you tracking? ___

Lawn Mowers ___ Boats ___ Other ___ (Please specify _____)

Machine Information

Processor: 486 ___ 586/Pentium ___ 686/Pentium Pro ___ Pentium II ___

MHz: _____ Ram (Mb): _____ HardDisk Size (Gig/Mb): _____

Modem speed: _____ bps

Operating system: Windows 95 ___ Windows NT ___ Other ___

Screen resolution used: 640x480 ___ 800x600 ___ 1024x768 ___ 1280x1024 ___

Shopping Calculator

Loan Calculator

This option will access the loan calculating screen.

The screenshot shows the 'Loan Calculator' interface. It is divided into two main sections: 'Calculate Loan Amount (not needed)' and 'Calculate Monthly Payment'. The first section contains input fields for Deal/Sticker (\$22,500.00), Trade-in (\$3,000.00), Sales Tax (6.00) resulting in \$1,170.00, Title Cost (\$8.00), Tags (\$50.00), and Downpayment (\$500.00). A 'Calculate Loan Amount' button is at the bottom. The second section contains 'Loan Amount' (\$20,228.00), 'Interest Rate' (8.00), 'Months' (60), and 'Monthly Payment' (\$410.15). A 'Calculate Monthly Payment' button is at the bottom.

The first part of the screen is not required to do the Monthly Amount calculations.

This screenshot shows the same 'Loan Calculator' interface, but the 'Calculate Loan Amount (not needed)' section is empty, with all input fields blank. The 'Calculate Monthly Payment' section remains filled with the same values as the previous screenshot: Loan Amount (\$20,228.00), Interest Rate (8.00), Months (60), and Monthly Payment (\$410.15). The 'Calculate Monthly Payment' button is still present.

Lease Calculator

This option will access the lease calculating screen. The first part of the screen is not required to do the Monthly Amount calculations.

Lease Calculator

Calculate Lease Amount (not needed)

Deal/Sticker	\$22,500.00
Trade-in	\$3,000.00
Title Cost	\$8.00
Tags	\$50.00
Downpayment	\$500.00
Residual Value at End	\$12,500.00

Calculate Lease Amount

Calculate Monthly Payment

Lease Amount	\$6,558.00	
Interest Rate	8.00	
Months	48	
Sales Tax	6.00	\$9.61
Monthly Payment	\$169.71	

Calculate Monthly Payment

UnInstall Auto Analyst

Thank you for trying Auto Analyst. If the program is missing something you would like to see in a program such as this, please contact me by Email at toml@infinet.com. I always listen to users request for possible improvements in the future.

To UnInstall

- Click on the [Start] button of Windows 95 or Windows NT v4.0
- Click on the [Settings] menu entry
- Click on the [Control Panel] menu entry
- Click on the [Add/Remove Programs] icon
- Select [Auto Analyst v2.1] from the list
- Click on the [Add/Remove] button on the lower right

*** Note: When it prompts you whether to delete all of the installed options, go ahead and click [Yes]. This procedure will only delete all of the Auto Analyst related objects (program, help, reports, menu declarations, registry updates). All of the Visual Basic related objects (Microsoft Access Jet Engine, Crystal Reports, and other .OCX's) will remain so that you cannot affect another program by unstalling this one.

