

Pre Version™

version 1.1.1-

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Overview

Pre Version™ is a utility that will maintain a history, or audit trail, of your documents for you, automatically. If you've ever made extensive revisions to a document, and then wanted to go back in time to either restore the original or simply see what the original had looked like, you'll appreciate PreVersion™. For document types that you select, Pre Version™ will make a saved version each time the document is saved (or opened and modified, depending upon how the accessing application works). You can control how frequently PreVersion™ captures versions and how many versions to keep (for example, the last 5 versions). You can also specify rules on a folder by folder basis (for example, WriteNow documents might be “monitored” in folder “A” but not in folder “B”).

PreVersion™ never modifies the original document in any way.

You can use PreVersion™ to maintain version histories of:

- documents for auditing purposes
- legal documents
- spreadsheets
- paintings or drawings
- programming source code files
- configuration files
- *any* Macintosh file you wish

All automatically, *without* manual intervention.

PreVersion™ is *not* a backup utility. Its purpose is to let you keep an easily accessible version trail so that you can see what changes you have made or change your mind about some of them and restore (or pluck bits out of) a previous version. ***SO BACK UP YOUR FILES!!!!!!***

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Pre Version™ is also *not* an auto-save utility. It does *not* automatically select “Save” for you from the “File” menu every so often. Pre Version™’s job is to quickly make a copy of the original document when you (or a real auto-save utility) do a “Save”, before the changes you are saving are written to the original.

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Usage Licensing Information

This particular version of the **Pre Version™** package is “Shareware” which means that you do not pay for the package before you use it, you pay for it after trying it to make sure that it meets your needs. If you continue to use the package after the 30 day trial period, you are then obligated to pay for it. Otherwise, you must not continue to use it. The license fee schedule is:

- single machine license \$35.00
- HOME license
(all of the Macintosh or compatible computers in your residence) \$50.00

Business site licenses are available and may be arranged by contacting me.

Prices are subject to change without notice, so contact me to verify current pricing.

Payment may be made by check or money order made out to me, Mike Throckmorton (my address is listed below). Orders must be accompanied by payment-in-full at the time of order. Monies must be in US currency with checks drawn on US banks, or by using international money orders.

You may pass the *ENTIRE* **Pre Version™** package (software + documentation) on to others, providing that you do not *CHARGE* for it. If you wish to sell the package, contact me and we will work something out.

You may contact me at:

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313-662-7902

CompuServe ID: 72220, 1611

Caveats, Warnings and Assurances

WARNING: Although great care has been taken in the design and construction of this package, it may contain errors or may interact with other software or hardware on your computer which may cause operational failures. The effects of such failures may cause damage (direct, indirect, etc). A CONDITION FOR USE OF THIS PRODUCT IS: IF YOU USE THIS SOFTWARE you agree that you will not hold

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either me (Mike Throckmorton) nor the person you got the package from responsible for such damage.
YOU USE THE SOFTWARE at YOUR OWN RISK.

In any case, damages are limited to the cost of the package.

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Changes from Previous Versions

This version has several fixes and enhancements:

- The Control Panel Device has been substantially enhanced:
 - New controls have been added to let you use new Pre Version™ features.
 - The Pre Version™ Control Panel's mechanism for adding creators and types has been revamped to allow you to add bunches at a time. When you click the “+” button, you get a dialog which lets you build a list of document types to be added. When you are finished, click “Done” and the list will be added.
 - You can now re-specify the name or location of a folder in your folder list using the ‘*’ button.
 - You can now copy and paste folder specifications, including document type sets. You can paste folder specifications either to replace an existing folder's specifications (replacing them) or to create a new folder entry.
 - The Control Panel now lets you specify two new groups of preferences, global preferences and application preferences, for three new options: notification messages, event logging, and versioning algorithm.
 - Notification messages: If PreVersion™ does not make a version of a monitored document, notification messages tell you the specific reason.
 - Event logging: PreVersion™ can be told to keep a log file of major events and errors for subsequent analysis and bug reporting.
 - Versioning algorithm: you can choose between accepting the default and forcing “continuous” versioning or “session” oriented versioning.
- You now have the option of keeping your versions in a completely separate folder structure on any available volume (so you can keep your versions on a different volume from the original, for increased safety).
- You no longer have to be concerned about closing and re-opening documents in certain applications to generate multiple versions during an editing/modification session.
- The standard “Open” dialog previously used to open versions from an application has been replaced by a “Version Management” dialog which provides several version manipulation operations.
- Pre Version™ no longer loses track of the folders you have told it to manage if you happen to completely reinitialize your hard disk and reload your files and directories.
- Pre Version™ will now notify you if it has problems locating folders you have told it to monitor. For example, if you change a monitored folder's name or location, Pre

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Version™ will detect this, attempt to locate the folder itself and ask you to correct the problem using the Control Panel.

- Balloon help is now present for all of Pre Version™'s dialogs.

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Installation

The package consists of this document and the PreVersion™ file.

To install:

- Backup your files.

It is important to keep backups of your files in any case, but, it is *especially* important when installing a new extensions (formerly known as “INITs”) on your machine. Even though the extensions you use may be carefully crafted, conflicts may occur amongst them which might cause your machine to crash or otherwise malfunction. Such crashes or malfunctions may incidently cause some of your files to become corrupted. In which case, you'll be glad you had backups of your data (and not so mad at the authors of the extensions).

- Drag the file “PreVersion™” into your System Folder.
- Use the PreVersion™ “Control Panel” dialog (see the “Configuration” section of this document) to select which folders and what document types you want monitored. You can make changes to your PreVersion™ configuration any time you wish and the reconfiguration changes will take effect immediately upon closing the Control Panel dialog. If you have an extension (or “INIT”) manager product, make sure that you tell it to let PreVersion™ load!
- Restart your computer.

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Gory Details

PreVersion™ watches for documents, of types that you specify, to be opened by any application (except the Finder) in folders that you specify. If an application does open one of these documents, PreVersion™ takes note of that fact. If the document is subsequently modified and saved, PreVersion™ will jump in and make a copy of it *before* the modifications are made to the original document (hence the name “Pre Version”).

Remember...

It is important to remember that PreVersion™ will not make a version of the document until the application actually tries to modify the original document on disk. For applications which only modify the original document when you save it, this means that if you open a document, make 10 hours worth of changes without saving (you foolish person) and then exit the application without saving changes (by clicking the “No” button on the usual “Save changes to document XYZ?” dialog) PreVersion™ will *NOT* have made a version.

Where the versions sleep...

PreVersion™ can use two different methods to store your version documents and you can choose which method you want PreVersion™ to use by choosing the appropriate option from the “Keep Versions” menu in PreVersion™’s Control Panel, as shown below.



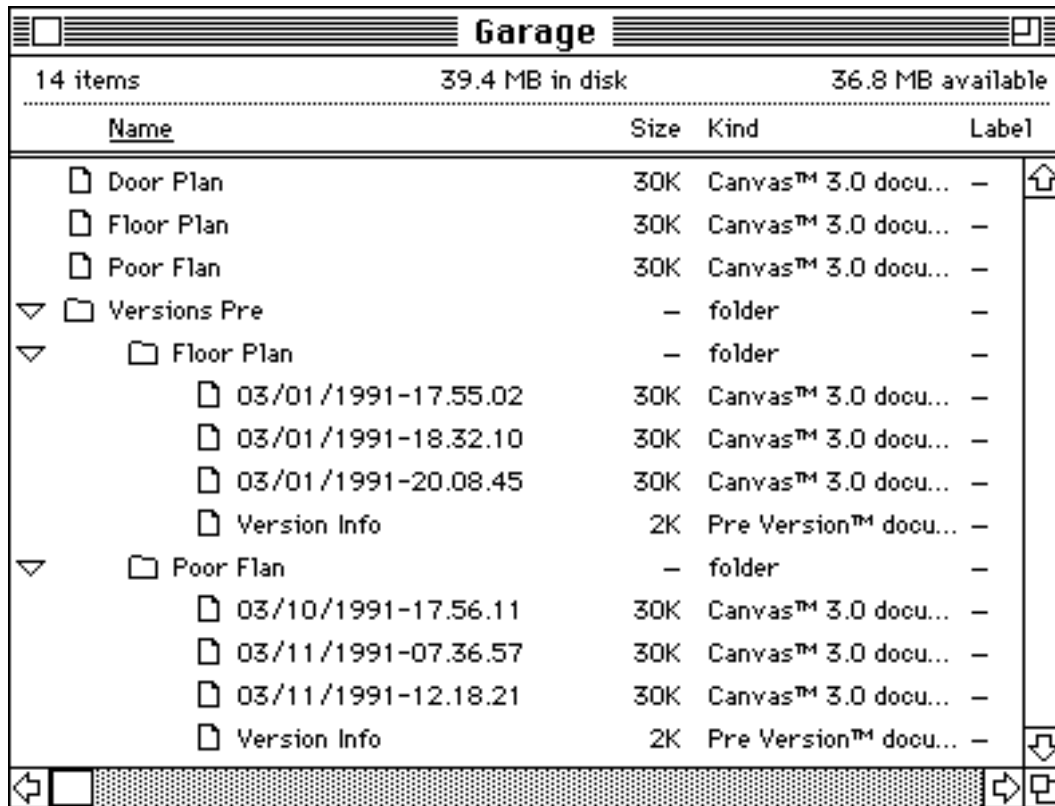
You can pick which method you want PreVersion™ to use on a folder by folder basis, so, you can have the versions of documents in one folder kept using one method, and the versions of another folder kept using the other method.

The first method PreVersion™ can use places the version documents in special folders named “Versions Pre” in each of the same folder(s) as the documents it is monitoring. Inside of each “Versions Pre” folder will be yet more folders, one for each document which has had a version created for it (we will call these folders “version document folders”).

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A version document folder has the same name as the document for which it is holding versions. Inside a version document folder you will find one file for each version. The version files are named with the date and time of the modification date of the original at the time the version was made.

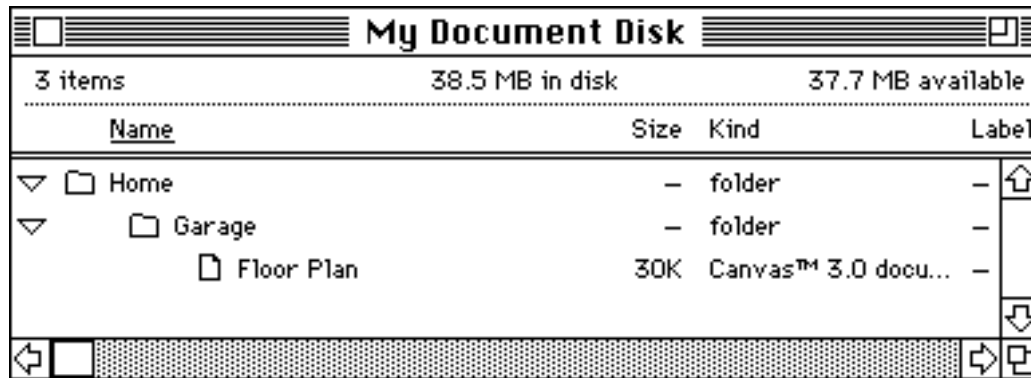
The screen shot in the next figure shows an example of a folder containing a “Versions Pre” folder and some version files.



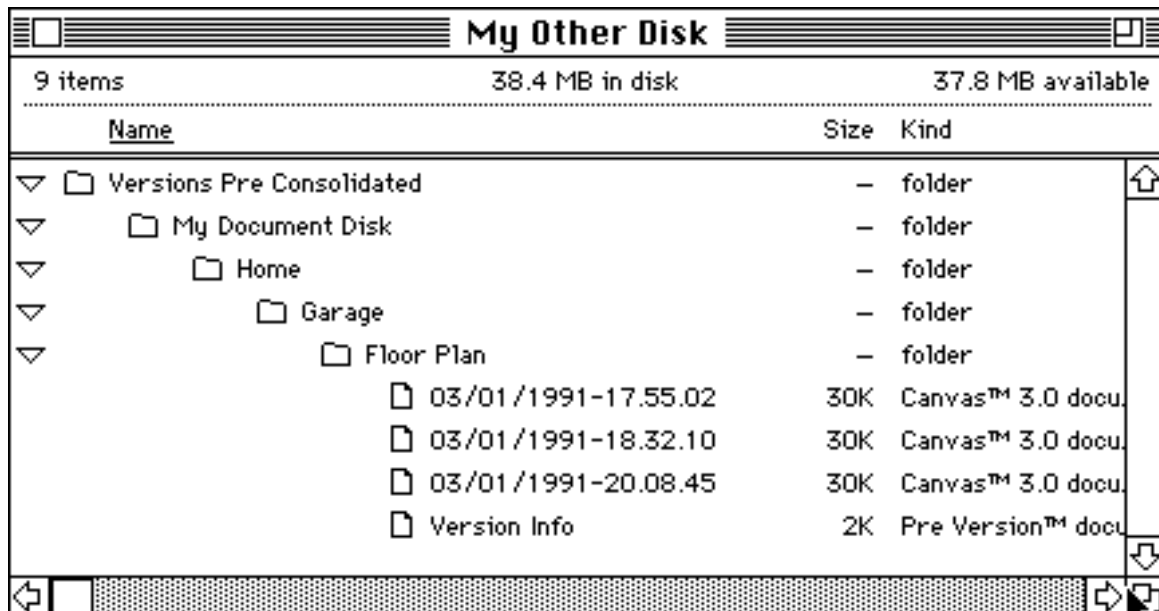
The second method, which Pre Version™ will use if you choose the “keep versions separately” option in the Pre Version™ Control Panel, keeps the version documents in a separate folder structure inside of a folder named “Versions Pre Consolidated”. When you choose this option using the Control Panel, you can pick where you want this folder to be kept, even on a different volume from the originals. This option provides some additional safety, because if the volume containing the original documents suffers a catastrophic failure, you will at least have your most recent versions preserved on a different volume to use to reconstruct your work. Inside of the “Versions Pre Consolidated” folder, Pre Version™ duplicates

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the originals' folder structures, so, if you have an original file whose folder "path" looks thus,



The path for the corresponding "Versions Pre Consolidated" folder might look like



Version Documents...

Version documents are normal documents of the same type as the original. They can be manipulated just

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like normal files (double-clicked, renamed, trashed, etc). If you want to clear out version documents which you no longer need, you can either drag them to the trash (holding down the “Option” key, if they have been locked) individually, or by the folder-full (drag the whole folder to the trash). The Version Managment dialog also allows you to delete individual versions or clear all of the versions for an original. You will not disturb PreVersion™’s operation by trashing versions, you will simply lose those versions.

If you need to reclaim disk space and decide that version files are the best victims, the easiest way to find all of the “Versions Pre” folders is to use the Finder’s **Find..** function located in the **File** menu (or equivalent). You can then remove either entire “Versions Pre” or “Versions Pre Consolidated” folders, entire version document folders, or individual version files. Of course, if you keep all of you versions in one “Versions Pre Consolidated” folder, it is a lot simpler to cull unneeded versions.

A Few Usage Notes...


- **Name changes:** If you change of a document (or other file) for which PreVersion™ has preserved versions, PreVersion™ does *not* automatically change the version file names (yet).
- **Deletes:** If you trash an original document, you will still have all of its versions. If you want to remove these, use the version removal techniques outlined above.
- **Disk space:** You must be selective about which documents and which folders you decide to have PreVersion™ monitor. Disk space can get eaten up quickly, especially if you forget to set “Min Interval” and “Max Versions” appropriately. For most purposes, you should set “Min Interval” to at least 5 minutes. You might even consider setting it to a full 24 hours, depending upon your specific needs. Also, consider pointing PreVersion™ just at folders you are currently working in with your most important documents and removing unnecessary version documents when you have completed your work on the originals

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Configuration

You configure PreVersion™ using its Control Panel dialog, which you get by:

System 6.0.x

opening the Control Panel (in your  menu), scrolling to the PreVersion™ configuration icon and clicking it.

System 7.x.x

selecting the Control Panel item in your  menu and double-clicking on the Pre Version™ document located in the displayed Control Panels folder.

You will see this dialog (initially, yours will be “empty”):

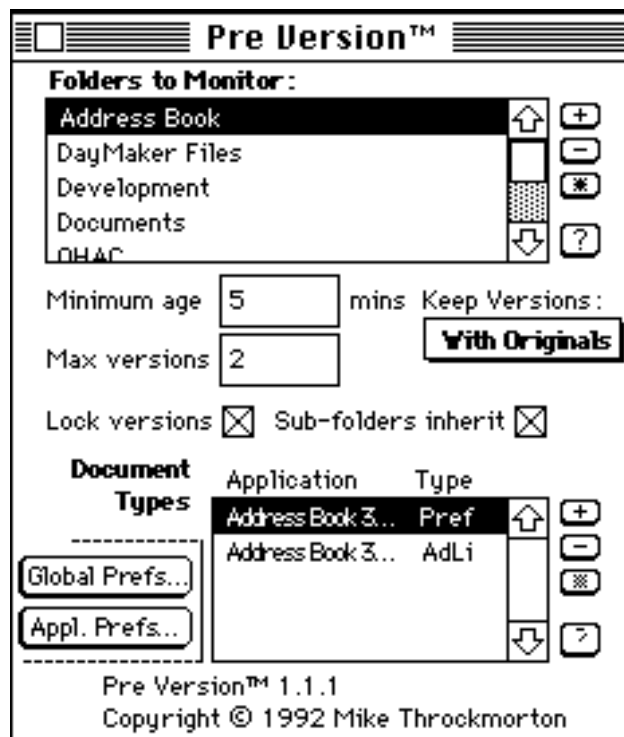


Figure 1

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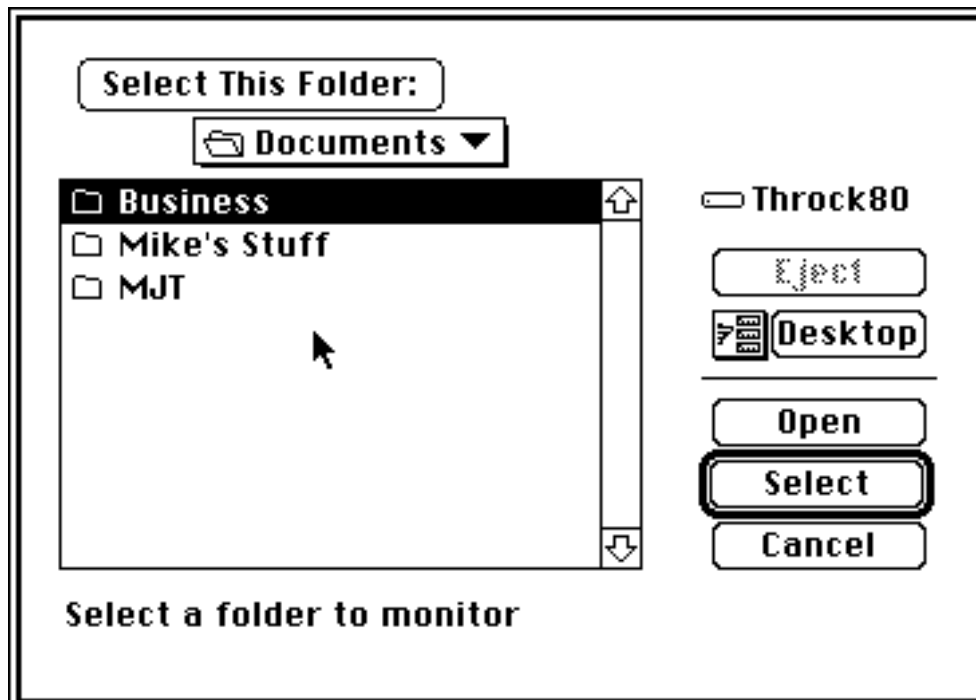
At the top of the dialog is the list of folders which Pre Version™ will monitor. The rest of the dialog box below the folder list shows the settings for **the currently selected (hilited) folder**. In the figure above, “Development” is the currently selected folder and, therefore, the specifications shown below the folder list are for the “Development” folder. It is important for you to note that these settings take effect for the selected folder (and, optionally, folders which it encloses). The settings consist of some general attributes and a list of the application/document type combinations that you wish PreVersion™ to monitor. The “Global Prefs” and “Appl. Prefs” buttons lead you to dialogs which let you control certain of Pre Version™’s features for all folders (“Global Prefs”) and for specific applications (“Appl. Prefs”).

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Folder list and Folder specifications

The configuration in Figure 1 shows that for the selected folder “Development”, (and all folders which it encloses, because the “Sub-folders inherit” box is checked) PreVersion™ will monitor for changes to Apple’s BalloonWriter balloon help specifications documents (type “bubl”), Deneba’s Canvas 3.0 drawing documents (type “drw2”), Borland’s Full Impact spreadsheet documents (type “Fl2d”), Borland’s FullWrite Professional™ word-processor document files (type “FWRT”), and Claris’ MacWrite II text documents (type “TEXT”). Scrolling the list further would reveal the rest of the document types which Pre Version™ will monitor inside of the “Development” folder (and folders nested therein). Also for “Development”, only the most recent 5 versions of monitored documents will be kept and versions will only be created for documents which were last modified at least 5 minutes past. Finally, for “Development”, the version files created will be “locked” to prevent them from being further modified. Version documents thus locked can be unlocked using the Finder “Get Info” window (or by using an equivalent third party utility).

You can add folders to the list by clicking the “+” button, navigating to the folder you wish to add, clicking on the folder’s name in the list, and clicking the “Select” button. For example, in the picture below,



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Figure 2

the Folder dialog is set up to select the folder “Business” and you would click **Select** to do so. Alternatively, you can open the folder (so that its contents show in the list) and then click the **Select This Folder:** button.

You can delete a folder from the list by selecting it and clicking the “-” (minus) button. You can see the folder path leading to a folder in the list by selecting the folder and clicking the “?” button (double-clicking the entry is a short-cut).

There are five attributes which you can set for each folder that you add to the Pre Version™ folder list:

- “Minimum age”, specified in minutes, controls how frequently Pre Version™ will capture versions. For example, let's say that “Minimum age” is set to 5 minutes and you have a document open which you have just modified and saved (causing a version to be created). Now let's say that for the next 9 minutes, you keep modifying and saving the document every 5 seconds (some insecure people, like myself, actually *do* this kind of thing). After this saving frenzy, you will only end up with the original version (made the first time you saved) and one additional version. PreVersion™ made the second version when you modified and saved the document after 5 minutes had elapsed from the time it captured the first version.

If you want PreVersion™ to capture all versions, set “Minimum age” to 0. For Pre Version™, “0” really means “5 seconds” due to the method it uses to detect saves, so, in reality, Pre Version™ can only capture separate versions made at least 5 seconds apart.

- “Max versions” controls the number of versions PreVersion™ will keep for each document. PreVersion™ will keep the last “Max versions” versions of each monitored document type. For example, if you set “Max versions” to 2 for a folder, no more than the two most recent versions of each affected document will be kept. When Pre Version™ is about to make a new version, it will remove the oldest existing version.

If you want PreVersion™ to keep all versions, set “Max versions” to 0.

- “Lock versions”, if set, will cause PreVersion™ to lock each version document

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it makes to prevent inadvertent modifications. You may unlock individual version documents using the Finder by selecting the document, selecting **Get Info** from the Finder's **File** menu, and clicking the "Locked" check box.

- "Sub-folders inherit", if checked, causes folders contained by the currently selected folder, to inherit any settings you make. You can specify a "global" set of attributes and document type monitors for a folder and its sub-folders by adding the folder to the list and setting its attributes and document types list as you choose. You can then, if you want, override these specifications for specified sub-folders of this folder by adding these sub-folders to Pre Version™'s folder list and setting their attributes as you wish. For example, assume that folder "A" encloses folder "B" and folder "C" and you set up "A" to monitor WriteNow files. If you check the "Sub-folders" inherit check-box, WriteNow files will be monitored in folders "B" and "C" as well. If you then add folder "B" to the Pre Version™ folder list and set it up to monitor Excel files only, then WriteNow files will not be monitored in folder "B". Folder "C" will continue to inherit "A"'s specifications.
- "Keep Versions: with originals or separately". This option lets you choose where you would like Pre Version™ to keep the version documents for files contained in the selected folder (and, optionally, all enclosed sub-folders). If you select "with originals", the default, the versions will be kept in the same folder as the original documents, inside a folder called "Versions Pre". Inside the "Versions Pre" folder, the versions for each file will be kept inside of a separate folder with the same name as the original file.

If you select "separately", the versions for files contained in the selected folder in the folder list (and, optionally, for all enclosed sub-folders) will be kept in a folder called "Versions Pre Consolidated" located in the volume and folder you choose. When you select this option by clicking on its radio button, you will be presented with a dialog box to choose the location where you want Pre Version™ to keep the "Versions Pre Consolidated" folder.

The "Document Type" list at the bottom of the dialog specifies the list of application/document type combinations that PreVersion™ will monitor to create versions. An application/document type combination tells PreVersion™ that whenever a document of the specified type, created by the specified application, is about to be modified, PreVersion™ should jump in and save the original as a version. For example, the MacWrite II/TEXT combination shown in the Control Panel picture above (Figure 1) means that if a document of type TEXT which has been created by the MacWrite II application is about to be

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modified (by any application), PreVersion™ should create a version copy.

You can add new combinations by clicking on the “+” button and using the file selection dialog to choose documents of the type that you wish monitored. In the dialog shown below,

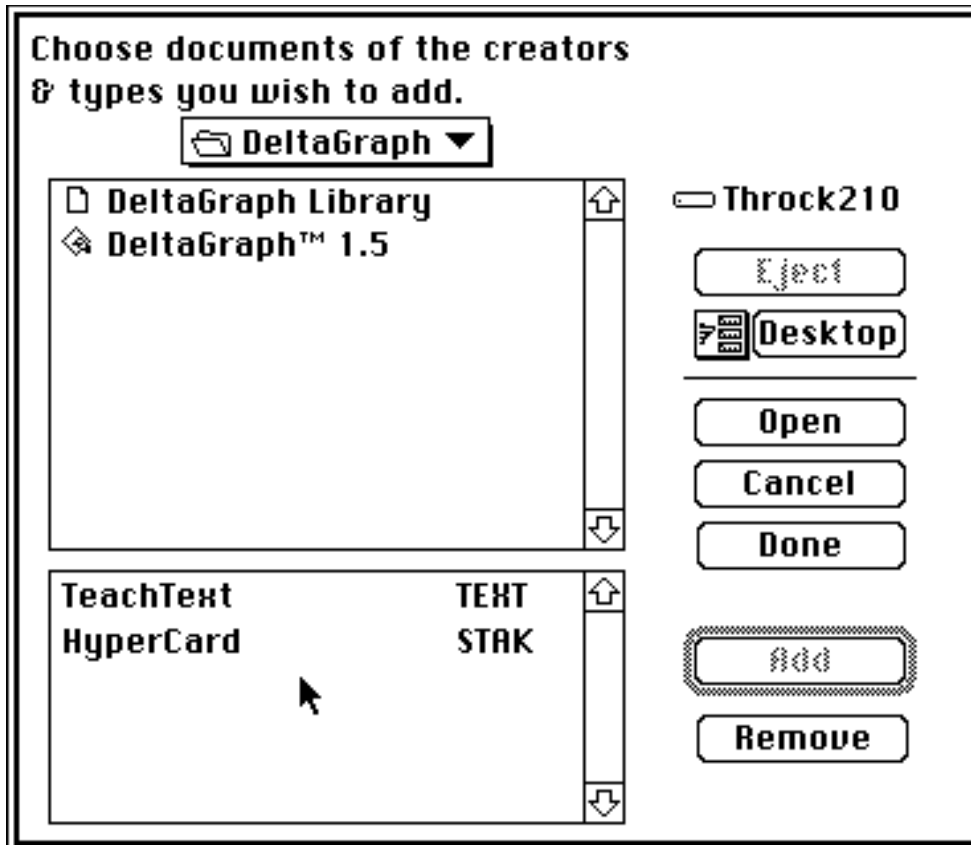


Figure 3

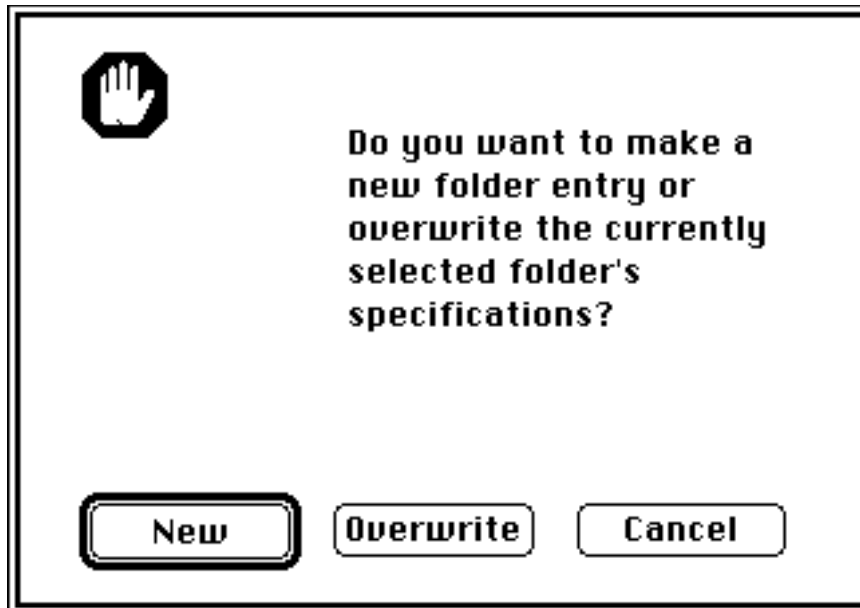
two document types will be added when the user clicks the Done button: TeachText TEXT documents and HyperCard stack documents.

You can delete combinations from the main document type list by selecting them and clicking the “-” (minus) button.

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Copy and Paste

The **Copy** and **Paste** items are available for your use in the Pre Version™ control panel. When you choose Copy from the Edit menu (or do the cmd-C keyboard shortcut), the Pre Version™ control panel copies all of the settings for the currently selected folder, including the document type list, to the clipboard. When you choose Paste, the control panel will show you a dialog offering three choices:

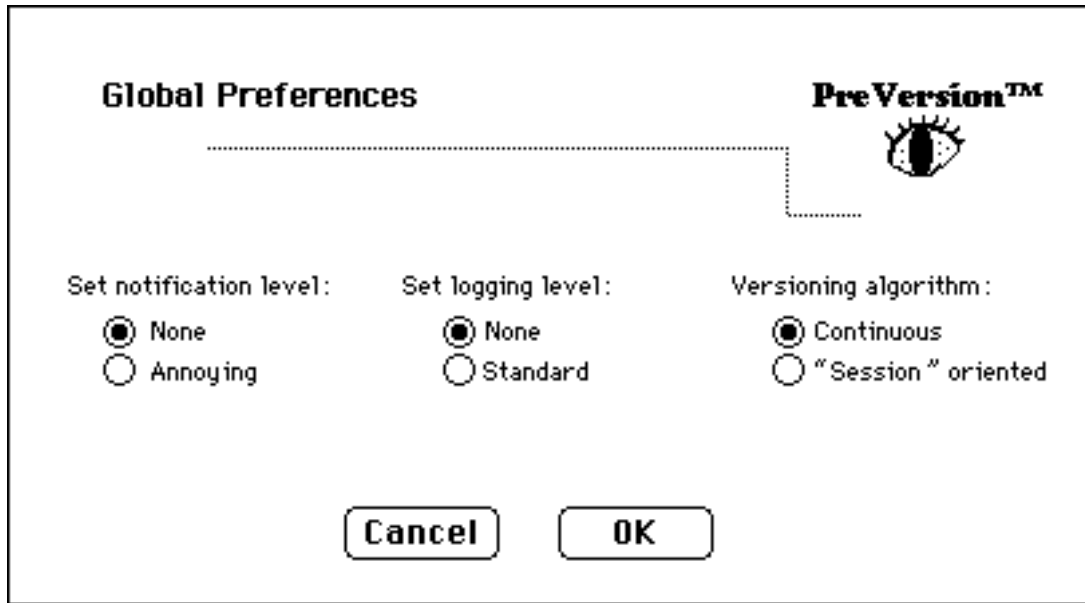


If you click **New**, the default, the control panel will make a new folder entry in the folder list exactly like the one you copied. **Overwrite** will overwrite the currently selected folder's settings and document type list with the copied settings and document type list. **Cancel** cancels the Paste operation.

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Global Preferences

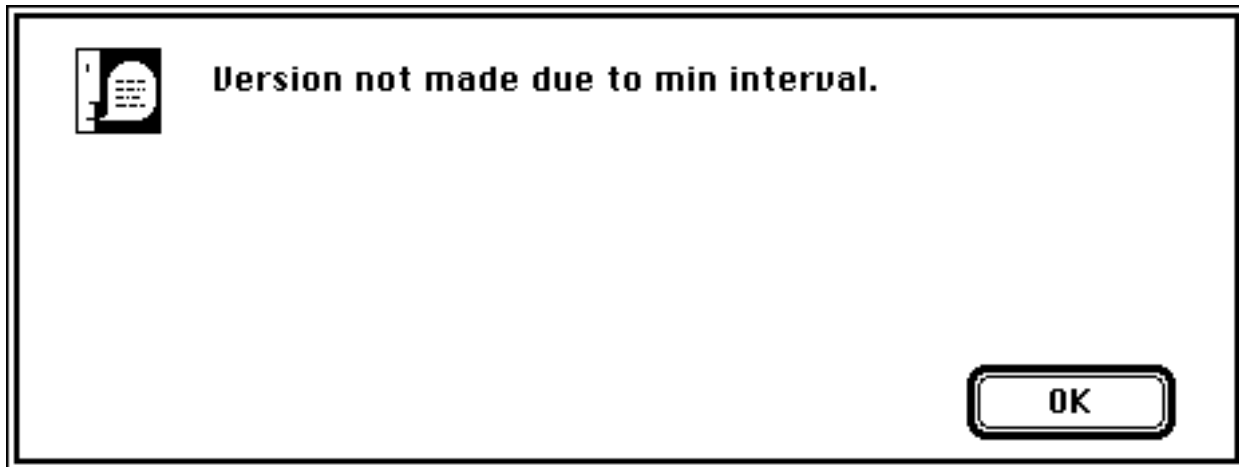
If you click the “Global Prefs...” button on the Pre Version™ control panel, you will see the “Global Preferences” dialog shown below. This dialog lets you set the following preferences controlling Pre Version™’s behaviour: notification control, logging level, and versioning algorithm.



Notification Level

The first control, “Set notification level” allows you to tell Pre Version™ whether or not you want to receive notifications about versions creation. For example, if you turn notification on by clicking the “Annoying” radio button, Pre Version™ will show you dialog box notifications whenever it did not (or can not) make a version of a file for which you have configured Pre Version™ to monitor. Under normal conditions, the only reason that Pre Version™ might be not make a version of a file you’ve told it to monitor would be if you’ve set the “Min Interval” attribute to some non-zero value and the file is modified and saved before that time period has elapsed since the last version was made. In this case, Pre Version™ will let you know that it didn’t make a version by showing you this dialog box:

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Pre Version™ will also show you a similar notification if an error of some kind occurred when it was trying to make a version file. For example, if Pre Version™ is trying to make a version and there is not enough free space on your disk to make it, you will be shown a similar dialog explaining that the version could not be made due to an error and show you the system error code (sorry) of the failure (which in this example would be -34, disk full).

Typically, you will leave this preference set to its default setting “none”. If it appears that Pre Version™ is not making versions when and where you expect it to, you can set the notification level to “annoying” and let Pre Version™ explain itself.

Logging Level

Pre Version™ can generate an audit trail log text file of its activities to help explain its behaviour and to help diagnose potential problems. Normally, you will leave this preference set to “none”. If, however, you have some question about Pre Version™’s actions or it appears that Pre Version™ has a bug that needs to be diagnosed, you can turn on logging by setting this preference to “standard”. Subsequently, Pre Version™ will maintain a text file in your System Folder called “PreVersion Debug Log” and, potentially, “PreVersion Debug Log/2”.

This text file can be viewed with just about any text editor or word processor, but, the information contained inside it may not be too useful to the non-technical user.

Versioning Algorithm

Normally, Pre Version™ will attempt to capture versions whenever a monitored file is modified, subject to

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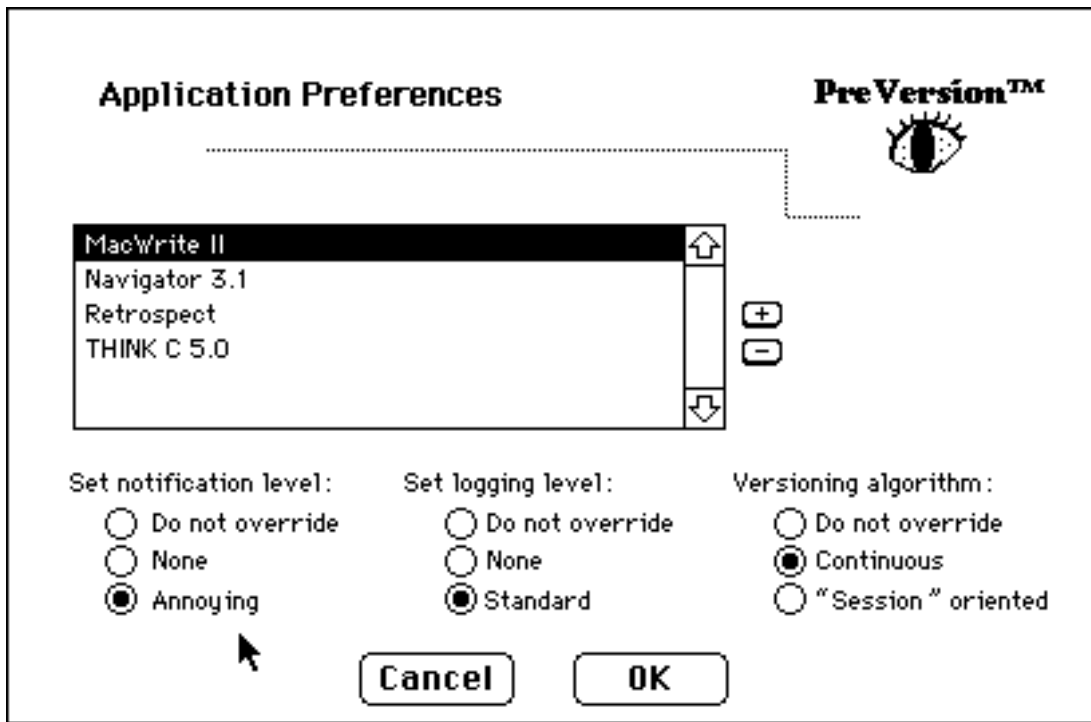
the “Min Interval” restrictions. A very few applications, however, do not operate using the typical “save” mechanism and write to their documents sporadically and incompletely. Occasionally, versions created by such programs are not complete and may not be usable. In such cases, you can tell Pre Version™ to use a different technique to capture versions which avoids these problems by selecting the “Session” oriented versioning algorithm.

Usually, you do not set this preference globally but instead set it for the specific application in the “Application Preferences” dialog (see below).

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Application Preferences

If you click the “Appl. Prefs...” button on the Pre Version™ control panel, you will see the “Application Preferences” dialog shown below. This dialog lets you set preferences controlling Pre Version™’s behaviour for specific applications. The settings here override the defaults set in the “Global Preferences”.



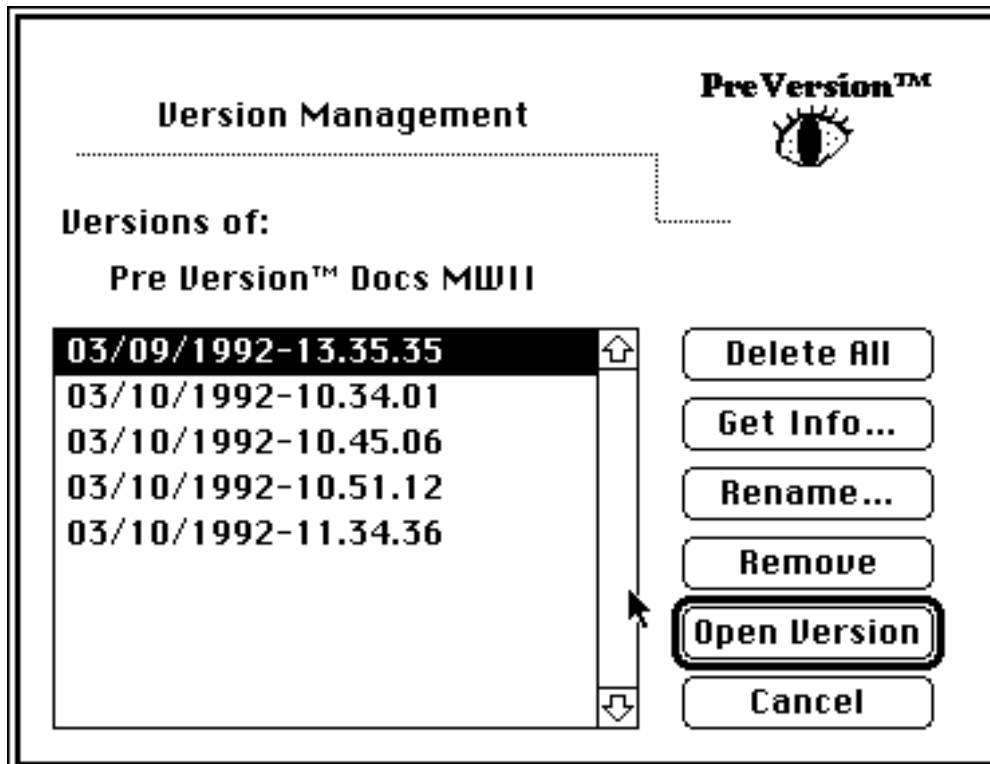
To override a preference setting for a specific application, first add the application to the list by clicking the “+” button and using the subsequent file selection dialog to navigate to the application and double clicking on it (or selecting it and clicking the **Open** button). Once it has been added to the list, you can override a specific setting simply by clicking the appropriate radio buttons. If you do not wish to override one or more of the preferences, you can leave the setting at “Do not override”.

In the example shown above, the settings for the MacWrite II application have been overridden for each preference.

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Accessing Versions

To access the saved versions of a particular document, start the application required to access the document, select the “Open” command (however you usually do it for the application) and navigate to the folder where the document is located. Select the document the usual way (using your mouse or keyboard) and, while holding down the “Command” key (clover-leaf), click the “Open” button (or double-click on the document name). PreVersion™ will then show you the Version Management dialog, containing a list of the versions, if any, of that document.



Each version is “named” with the date and time of the version like this,

03/10/1992-10.34.01

which means that the last *modification* date of the original document when this version was made was

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March 10, 1992 at 10:34:01 in the afternoon. It is not the date and time that the version was made.

You can open a saved version by selecting it and clicking “Open Version” or double-clicking on it.

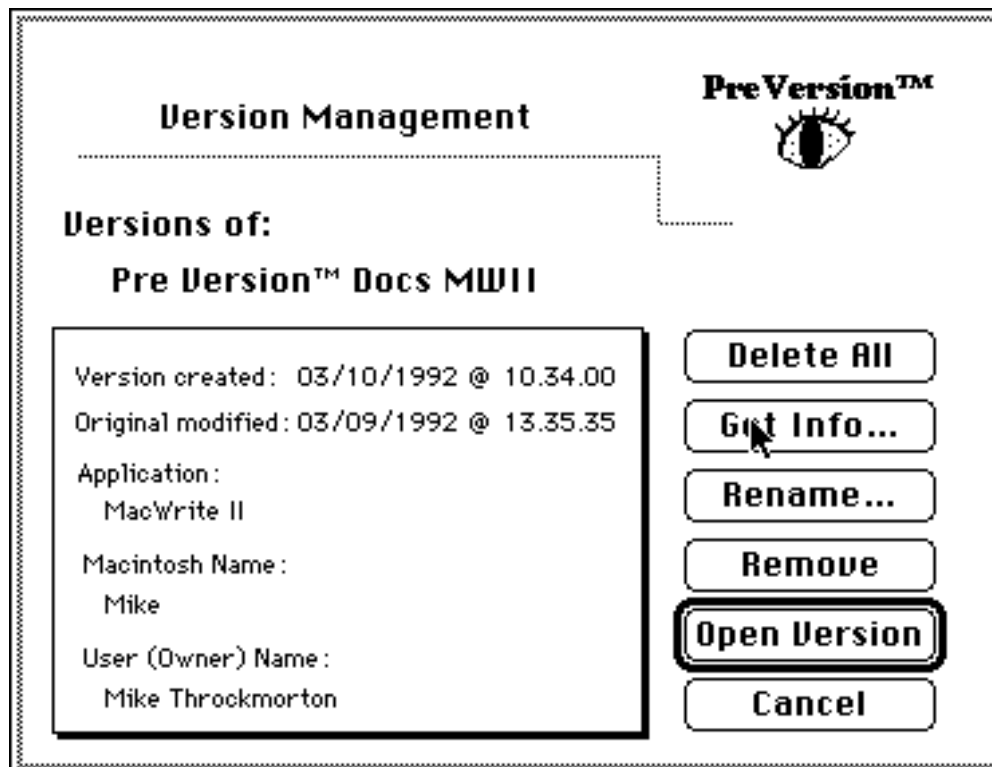
If you've elected to keep your “versions” unlocked, you ought not to modify them directly (documents inside of “Version Pre” folders are NOT monitored). Always open the version and do a “Save As” if you wish to “retrieve” and modify a version document.

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The Version Management Dialog lets you do the following with the displayed versions:

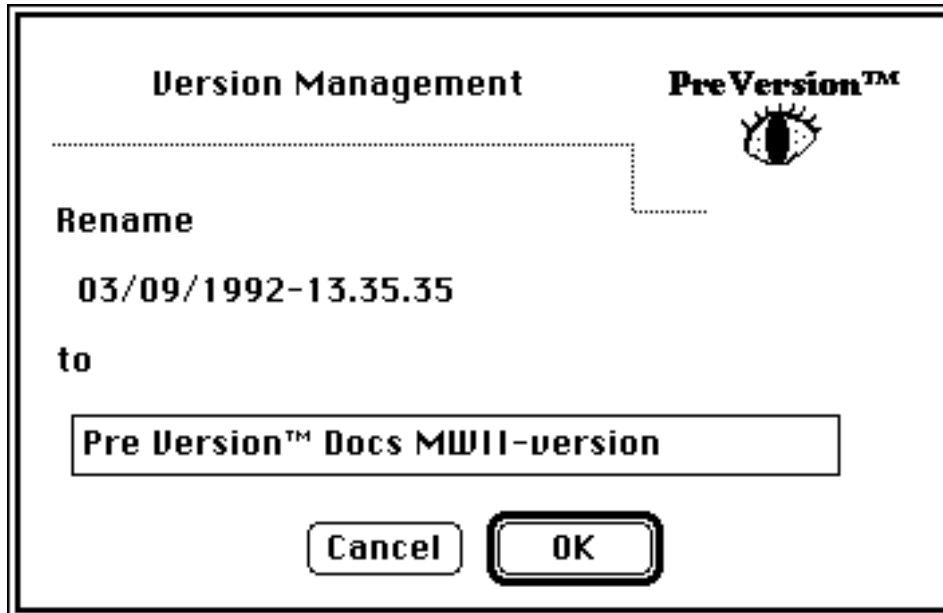
- **Delete All** button - delete all displayed versions and the enclosing version folder for the original document (not the entire Versions Pre or Versions Pre Consolidated folder)
- **Version Info** button - view information about specific versions
- **Rename...** button - rename a version file
- **Remove** button - delete specific versions
- **Open Version** button - open a specific version

The functions are fairly self explanatory. The Delete All and Remove buttons each show you a confirmation dialog to make sure that you don't delete versions by accident. The Version Info button shows you a dialog containing information specific to the version you've selected, as in the example below:



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The Rename button shows you the following dialog to allow you to enter the new name for the version.



To open a version, simply select the version you want to open and click the Open Version button.

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Final Notes

If you keep this package, remember that it is important, besides the fact you ought to feel badly if you don't and are legally obliged, to register your copy with me and to pay the shareware fee. I am not Microsoft. There are not millions of people out there sending me billions of dollars to pay me for my work. If *you* don't pay me, I don't get paid.

When you register, I will send you the latest shareware version of Pre Version™ on a diskette, along with a printed manual.

If you don't keep it, for whatever reason, I would love to hear your comments so I can improve the product.

In any case, thanks for trying it out and make sure to let me know what you think!

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CompuServe 72220,1611

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