Help For Comics!

Help is available for the following topics:

[The Main Window](#)

Other Windows:

[Support for Comics!](#)

[Installation](#)

The Comics! Main Window

The Comics! main window is where most of the entry for the Comics! system is done.   Most of the information about a single comic is displayed in the window, along with icons which are used to display more detailed information if it is present.   More information is available about:

Menus

Fields

Controls

Percentages

Menus

The menus can be used to perform many tasks.   Each of the menu options is available for further help below:

The Files Menu

Preferences
Reports
Resynchronization
Exit

The Records Menu

Add Multiple Copies
Add Run
Search   (F5)
Add   (F9)   See Add Button
Change   (F8)   See Change Button
Delete   (Shift+Ctrl+F1)   See Delete Button
Find   (F2)   See Find Button
Previous   (F3)   See Prev Button
Next   (F4)   See Next Button

The Detail Menu

AutoCalc
Erase Field
First Field
Guide Values
Orders
Details Entry Options

The Help Menu

The Help Menu options display the Windows Help facility, which is what you are using to view this.   For help on using the help facility, choose the **Help On Help** option from the help menu.

The Guide Value Window

The guide value window is displayed by pressing **Detail Guide** from the menus.   It is used to enter in series of guide values which can then automatically update the value of the comics on the database. Enter the range of comics by entering the first number and type in the left hand box and then enter the ending number in the right hand box.   After entering the values for low, medium, high, and the guide year, click on the Add Button

Use the **Skip Ending Number** option for those series of comics for which most of the guide values does not cover a range of values, but rather a single value.   Using this option, the second number fields are hidden and you enter only a single number and the guide values for that number.   A good example of this is many of the movie comics and the Four Color series.

To enter a long run of comics, first enter the longest run which has the same value.   Then enter in the individual (or short runs or) comics which differ from the value of the entire range.   For example, if most of the comics from Daredevil 100 to 200 are valued at $3.00, enter the Daredevil 100 to 200 range with a high value of $3.00 first.   Following that, enter in those shorter ranges or individual comics which are not valued at $3.00, such as Daredevil 158, valued at $35.00.   (These are examples only, and have only a slight resemblance to actual valuation.)

The **Apply Button** is used to "apply", or update, the comics database with the guide values just entered. Selecting the **Apply Only New Entries** option restricts the updates to the entries from the guide values which were entered since the last time the **Apply Button** was used, which can substantially reduce the time it takes to apply guide values if there are a large number of guide value entries.

The Preferences Window

This window is available to modify various parameters of the system for individual tastes.   Options are turned on or off by clicking on the option box immediately to the left of the option.   Likewise, the current value of the setting is indicated by whether or not the box is filled in.

The "Automatically Calculate Current Value" and "Automcally Calculate Cost" options are used to turn on or off automatic calculation of the current value and/or cost after discount of each comic when the Add Button is pressed.

The "Use Alternate Entry Order on Main Window" changes the order in which the boxes on the main window are visited.   The default entry flows across and down the screen.   Checking this box changes the order to one which allows the entry of information from the outside of the comic book first, and then follows with entries for which the book may have to be opened, such as creators and publication date.

The "Year To Treat As Old For Grading" entry determines the date before which valuation is performed using the "old" set of values entered into the grading scheme.   Grading Schemes contains more information about using alternate grading schemes.

The options to Track Costs, Creators, Characters, Expenses,   Grading, Miscellaneous, Numeric Equivalent, Series, Values, and Whiteness Level are turned on or off to display each of these sets of boxes on the main window.   For example, if you do not care to enter creator information for most comics, turning the "Track Creators" option off (by clicking on the box next to the option so that it no longer contains an "X") removes the creators box from the main window.

The Icons Button is used to change the icons which are displayed on the various Comics! program items. Each of the four program icons can be changed by clicking on the appropriate Change Button and then selecting an icon file.   Several icon files are distributed with Comics! and installed in the Icons! subidirectory of the program directory.   Note that only separate icon files (those with ICO extensions) can be used.   Press the associated Default Button to return the program to the original icon.
Pressing the Change Program Group Button on the icons window causes new items to be added to the Comics! windows group for each of the four programs, with the icons selected on the window.

The Save Button must be pressed to save the information (and other operating parameters) for the next use of the software.   Any changes to icons are made at the time they are changed in the icons window, however.   Press the Exit Button to close the preferences window and return to the main window.

The Reporting Window

The reports window is displayed in either of two ways.   If the main comics window is being used, click on the reports menu option.   If reports are desired without having to wait for the main window to be displayed, or if graphing is desired, click on the Reports! program manager icon.

Reports can be printed at any printer which is attached to the computer and which is set up for Windows. To select between multiple printers, or to configure a printer, press the Printer Button.

Any font which is available for the current printer can be used to print reports, at almost any size.   Most reports look best at a size of 10 to 12, though if your printer supports smaller sizes, several of the reports can be printed using much less paper at a size of 5 or 6.   Press the Setup Button to display the Setup Window.

The next step in printing a report is to make a report selection.   The list of reports can be scrolled up and down using the scroll bars to the right of the box.   Click on the report name and press the Run Button or double click on the report to select the desired report.   The Report Parameters Window is displayed, in which report attributes can be modified.

After selecting parameters, press Enter or click on OK to continue and have the report printed.

Report Parameters Window

The report parameter window can be used to limit the number of pages on a report, and also controls whether certain elements are displayed on some report.

Many reports, such as those which display counts and values, default to printing two pages, with none of the "include in listing" parameters available.   Comic listings default to all pages.

Select which type of notes and whether or not grades are printed on the reports as desired for those reports which these options are available.

Setup Window

The setup window is used to modify the format and appearance of reports.   Fonts, sizes, and margins are all selected from this window, and may be saved across sessions with Comics! by clicking on the Save Button.

Report headings are the first few lines of the report before the detail information is displayed.   You can choose the font for the headings by opening the font list and selecting the desired font.   All available Windows fonts should be displayed on the list.   The size of the font is set in the next box.   Clicking on any combination of Bold, Italic, or Underline prints the font with those attributes.

Check the Underline Column Headings option to add underlining to the individual column headings.   The report name itself (the centered title on the first line of the report) may be printed with a different size font than the remaining headings.   A size font two or three larger than the report headings often produces pleasing results.

The font, size, and attribute options are also available for Comic Titles and Creators.   These are the titles and creator names when printed on the Comics By Artist and Comics Summary report, and they can use a different font and/or size if so desired.

The report body is the main portion of the report, the details.   A size of 10 to 12 is often pleasing, though smaller sizes can be used to fit more information on each page.   Check the Use For Column Headings option to print the column headings in the font and size selected for the report body rather than that of the headings.

The report totals can also be modified to print them in a different font, size, or with different attributes.

Page margins can be adjusted so that the reports print best on your specific printer.   They can be entered directly, or adjusted using the spin controls to the right of each.

The four displayed boxes approximate the look of the particular font and size, particularly when using a type manager or Windows 3.1 and True Type fonts.

Selecting the bold text attribute prints the selected areas of the report in a darker print if such is available for the font which is selected.

Selecting the Italics text attribute prints the selected areas of the report in a slanted (oblique) manner if such is available for the font which is selected.

Selecting the underline text attribute prints the selected areas of the report with underlines.   This attribute should be used with care, as most areas of reports should not be underlined.

Resynchronization

Resynchronization is a process where all of the pieces of the database are examined to be sure that 1) there are no missing pieces and 2) for a full rebuild, insure that all values are correctly calculated on the details, so that all reports are correct.

A partial resynchronization should be performed approximately once a month. A full rebuild resynchronization should be performed after any of the following:

1.   Entry of each thousand or more comic books.
2.   Applying a large number of guide entries.
3.   Re-installing Comics!, including updates.
4.   A warning from the software that resynchronization may be needed.
5.   Every six months of light use or three months of heavy use.

To perform a resynchronization, use the **File Resynchronize** option from the main window, or double click on the Synchronize! icon.   A window will be displayed asking if a full rebuild should be done.   Click on Yes to continue with a full rebuild, click on No to perform a database checkout and quick repair, or click on Cancel to continue without performing the resynchronization.

A partial rebuild will take only a couple of minutes, even with a large number of comics and details.   A full rebuild, however, takes approximately ninety minutes for 14,000 comics on a 25 mHz computer with a fast disk drive.

It is advisable to perform a full rebuild with any screen savers disabled (moving the mouse cursor to a particular corner of the screen usually is sufficient) and with minimal other activity.   It is possible to continue with other work during resynchronization, but there will be occasional periods when other work is greatly slowed.   The resynchronization may also take significantly longer to complete.

The Graphing Window

The graphing window is displayed by selecting a graph report from the report window.   The graph reports are only listed in the report window if it was invoked from an icon, rather than as a menu option or the Reports Button on the main window.   Select the graph report by double clicking on the desired graph item.

The graphing window will be displayed, and after a few seconds, the graph by count will be displayed. Items which have more than three percent of the total are graphed, the remainder are grouped in the "Other" category.

Clicking on the Cost, Value, or Count Radio Buttons will change the graph to the corresponding values. Clicking on the Graph Type Options will change the graph to a two dimensional pie or bar graph, or a three dimensional pie or bar graph.

The remaining set of options control how the graph is printed.   Cross hatching or gray scaling should each be tried to determine which produces the best graph for any particular printer.   The border option controls whether a border is printed around the graph.

Press the Print Button to print the graph to the currently selected printer.   Press the Done Button to close the graphing window and return to the reports window.

There are currently four graph types available, two and three dimensional pie charts, and two and three dimensional bar graphs.   Click on the associated radio button to switch the display to the desired type of graph.

The cost as displayed in the graph is the total of the cost of the comics, plus any tax, shipping, or miscellaneous expense associated with the comics.

The count as displayed in the graph is the total number of comics which meet the criteria displayed on the graph, such as the number of comics for each source or each condition/grade.

The value displayed on graphs is the total of the present values of the comics.

The add button on any window adds what is currently displayed in the window to the database.   The add button can usually be accessed by pressing the Enter key as well as clicking on the button or pressing Ctrl+A.   Often the change or add button should be pressed before performing other work, such as adding additional creators or characters in the main window, or adding order details on the order windows.

The change button on any window modifies whatever was last retrieved from or added to the databse to reflect what is currently displayed in the window.   Often the change or add button should be pressed before performing other work, such as adding additional creators or characters in the main window, or adding order details on the order windows.

The exit button leaves the Comics! system from the main menu, or returns to the previous window from sub-system or other entry windows.

The print button on the order window causes the order to be printed.   The print button on the graphing window causes the graph to be printed to the currently selected printer.

The printer button displays the printer selectoin window, from which the desired printer can be selected, or the printer can be set up.   Note that Comics! or Reports! will be restarted if this window is selected so that any printer changes can be incorporated into the software.

The new button open a new line of entries in the creator or character windows.   It can be clicked multiple times to create several blank entries for modification.

The report button displays the reporting window, from which reports can be printed.

The run button starts the report printing process for the selected report.   This is the same as double clicking on the report option.   The report parameters window is displayed after the report is selected.

The Save Button on the preferences, icons, and setup windows saves the options entered up to that point so that those options are used each time Comics! is started.   The save and save/exit buttons on the character and creator windows save entries to that point, and optionally return to the main window.

The Setup Button displays the setup window, in which various report formatting choices can be made.

The book icons can be clicked on to display the creator or character windows from the main window. The books are closed if there are not any more entries than can be displayed on the window, or open if there are more entries associated with the comic.

The plug-it-in icons are used to quickly fill in certain fields on the windows.   See the field definition which contains the icon for more information on what pressing on the particular icon will do.

The Exit option leaves the Comics! system and returns you to Windows.

Add Multiple Copies Menu Option

The **Add Multiple Copies** menu item can be selected to automatically add multiple copies of the same issue, all with the same information.

Enter all of the information for the issue and press <u>Add</u> to add the first copy.   Then select **Records Add Multiple** to add the multiple copies.

A small window is displayed requesting the number of copies to add.   Enter the number of copies remaining **(not the total number of copies)** and press the OK Button.   After a short amount of time, depending on the number of copies, the small window will be removed and the main window displayed with the information about the last of the multiple copies.

Any information, such as grading, which may be different for some of the copies, can then be modified for one of the copies and saved by pressing the <u>Change Button</u> after entry into the main window boxes is complete.

Important:

Notes, those creators beyond the first two, and characters beyond the first, are **not** duplicated for each of the comics.   These will still have to be added on an individual basis as desired.

Add Run Option

The **Add Run** menu item can be used to enter basic information about a series of comics.

To add a run of comics, first enter the information about one of the comics in the run.   It should be either the first or the last issue number in the run.   Enter in as much information as is common to many or all of the comics and press the Add Button to store this information.

Then select **Records Add Run** from the menus.   A small window will be displayed, in which you enter the beginning and ending numbers of the run, except for the one which was just added on the main window.   After this is completed, press Enter or click on the **OK Button** to add the comics in the run, including both the first and last numbers entered on the small window.

The individual entries in the run can now be modified as desired, or deleted where they are not applicable.   Note that only normally numbered comics can be entered using this option, there is no facility for Annuals, Giants, etc.

The Search Menu Option

The **Records Search** option, which is also accessed by pressing **F5** in a box, is used to search for the next comic which matches the value which is currently in the box.

This is available in the Number, Grade, Publisher, Source, Container, and Series boxes.   It is also available in the Purchase Date and Publication Date boxes, but searches on the year portion of the date only.

To use this option, enter a value into a field, and press **F5**.   Either the next comic which contains that value is displayed, or a message is displayed indicating that no matches were found.   This option searches for exact matches only, and may take some time to execute if there are a large number of comics on the database.

The **AutoCalc** option is available when in a box which has an associated plug it in icon.   By pressing Ctrl+A or selecting this menu item, the value will be calculated without having to position the mouse to the icon and pressing it.

The **Erase Field** option can be used to erase the entire contents of a field.   **Ctrl+E** can also be pressed to accomplish the same action.

The **First Field** option, also selected by pressing <u>F12</u>, moves the active box to the title box.

Fields

Title
Number
Date Published
Publisher
Date Purchased
Source
Grading Fields
Cover
This Copy
Tax
Shipping
Other Cost
Value Fields
Creator Fields
Black and White
Magazine
Container
Characters
Series

The **title box** contains a one to five character title code.   This code translates into a long title which is displayed to the right of the box.   Pressing the Lookup Button displays as many as one hundred titles which match the code (partial or complete) currently in the title box.

The **date published** is used to enter the date the comic was published.

The **publisher** list is used to enter the publisher of the comic.   Select a publisher from the list, or add the new publisher by using the details entry window for publishers.

The **date purchased** field is used to enter the date the comic was purchased.   The <u>plug-it-in icon</u> located next to the field automatically enters the current system date into the field.

The **source list** is used to select the source of the comic.   Choose an existing source from the list, or add a new source by using the details entry window for sources.

The **cover price** records the cover price of the comic book.   Discounted price can then be calculated as a percentage of this amount if the source of the comic has a standard discount amount entered for it on the details entry window for sources.

The **this copy** field is used to record the price paid forthe comic.   It may be calculated automatically by pressing the <u>plug-it-in icon</u> next to the field.

The **tax** field is used to record the taxes paid for the comic. It may be calculated automatically by pressing the <u>plug-it-in icon</u> next to the "this copy" field.

The **shipping** field is used to record the amount of shipping expense paid forthe comic.

The **other cost** field is used to record the other expenses paid forthe comic.   For example, if a bag and board was purchased with the comic, these would be other costs.

The Black and White check box can be checked to indicate that the current comic is printed in black and white rather than color.

The Magazine check box can be checked to indicate that the current record is in reality a magazine rather than a comic.

The Container box allows entry of a number, which is normally a numbered box or other location.   This field is then used to keep track of the physical location of a comic.

The series list box can be used to tie comics together as series of comics, including crossovers and annual sets.

Number Box

The **number box** is used to record the number of the comic, and contains two components. The smaller box is used to actually enter the numeric value. The radio buttons are used to record the type of number which the comic has (if the number is really a date, if it is an annual, etc.).

To enter the number of a comic, first decide whether this is a normal number. A normal number will appear on reports without any further text, and must be entirely numeric. This is the case with most normal comic books. To enter a normal number, enter the number and then tab through the radio button to continue entry of other information. **Note that a normal number entry of zero will be displayed on reports as "nn".** If the actual number zero is desired, it must be entered using the hidden number format described below.

If the comic is an Annual, or if you wish the words "Giant Size", "King Size", or "Special" to be displayed with the number, enter the number and then either click on the related radio button or use the arrow keys to move among the radio buttons until the correct entry is marked, and then tab to the next entry.

Volume numbers are displayed in the format Vnn#nnn, such as V1#3 or V22#18. Several comics, such as "Treasure Chest" and "Red Sonja", have been numbered in this way. To enter this type of number, enter a "V" in the number box. The **Volume #** radio button will automatically be highlighted.

There are two date formats supported for a comic number. The first is month and year only, such as 12/92 or 01/93. Most monthly magazines are recorded using this format. The second is month, day, and year, as 12/25/92 or 01/18/93. Weekly periodicals often use this format for their number. To enter either type, enter the portions of the date which are needed, and tab to the radio buttons. The first date option, M/Y, will be highlighted. If the date should be in the M/D/Y format, click on that radio button or use the down arrow key to highlight it.

Hidden numbers are not displayed on reports, but are replaced by any general note which is associated with the comic. This option is used whenever one of the other formats will not produce the desired results. This is useful in several cases, including graphic novels which have a title but are not numbered. For example, to enter an X-Men Graphic Novel which you would like included in the X-Men portion of reports, enter XMEN in the title field and tab to the number box. Enter a number such as 483, and then select the hidden option. After saving the comic information, click on the general notes icon and enter the actual name of the graphic novel in the notes window.

While any number can be used for a hidden number, reports will print the entries in the order of the hidden numbers. Therefore, if there are several hidden number entries for a title, the numbers assigned as the hidden numbers should be assigned in the order in which the entries should be printed on reports.

There are several other uses for the hidden number option. Another example is annuals which are not numbered, but only identified by year. If you enter the year in the number box and then check the annual option, reports will display the comic as "Annual 1978". If it would be more desirable to see "1978 Annual", enter 1978 in the number box, but check hidden. After saving the comic information click on the general notes icon, and enter "1978 Annual" as the note.

Grading Fields

The grading fields are used to store the condition, or grade, of the comic.   The judged grade of the comic is stored using the **condition** (or **grade**) **list**, which   can be set up to use any grading scheme which is desired.   The value for this box is selected by entering the first character or two and tabbing out of the box, or by clicking to open the list and then clicking on the desired entry.

The **numeric equivalent** and **whiteness level** can also be stored.   These can be entered directly, or the values can be modified by clicking on the spin control to the right of the respective box.   Numeric equivalent is entered as a whole number between 1 and 100 (zero indicates no numeric equivalent is present).   The whiteness level can be stored as a half value between two numbers.   The whiteness level must be from .5 to 10.0, or zero to indicate that the whiteness level is not being stored.   Either or both of these fields can be removed from the window by an option on the preferences window.

Value Fields

The value fields are used to store the guide value(s) and the year of those guide values for the comic, as well as its current (present) value.   The first row of entries is used to initially enter the original guide value(s) at the time the comic was purchased.   As you tab through these fields, the corresponding current guide value will be filled in provided that they do not already have values in them.

When guide values are updated, either by using the guide entries window or by changing the values using the main window, the current set of values are changed to reflect the latest guide values.   The present value box can be updated by pressing the plug-it-in icon above it, by directly entering the value, or at the time the Add Button is pressed if automatic value calculation is turned on in the preferences window.

Creator Fields

The creator fields on the main window can display two creators and creator types.   Each creator type must be paired with a creator.   For entries beyond two creators, click on the Book Icon to display the Creators Window. The book does not have to be open to use the creators window, it can be clicked on at any time to work with creator associations.

Characters Field

The character field is used to enter the first character to be associated with the comic.   Additional character are entered using the Character Window after the Add Button has been pressed to store the comic.   To access the window, click on the Book Icon next to the characters list.

Percentages on the Main Window

The percentage figure (or series of "greater than" signs) to the right of the cover box shows the relative amount you paid for the comic as compared to the cover price.   For example, if the cover price of the comic was $1.00, and you paid $.75 for it, the percentage figure would be 75.00%, indicating you paid 75 percent of cover price for the comic.   If the cover price were $.10, and you paid one hundred dollars for the comic, the percentage figure would be ">>>>", indicating that the percentage is too large to be meaningfully calculated.

The percentage figures next to the tax, shipping, and other boxes indicate the relative percentage of these to the price you paid.   If you paid $2.00 for a comic, and paid $.12 for taxes, your tax rate would be 6.00%, as indicated to the right of the tax box.

The Characters Window

Only one character association is displayed or maintained on the main window. Any additional associations must be made using this window. When the window is displayed, all existing associations are displayed, alone with one line which contains no entries.

To remove an entry, position the highlight in the list box to the association which is to be removed by clicking once on the line containing the entry to be removed, or use the spin control to move the highlight up and down. Click on the character list box and change the entry to "(None)". This can also be accomplished by pressing the space bar to clear the box and then pressing **Tab** to leave the box. When the Save or Exit/Save buttons are pressed, the old character association will be deleted.

Modifying entries is done in much the same fashion as the removal of entries. First click on or move to the association which is to be modified, and then change the character to the correct value, and press one of the Save buttons.

To add one new entry, position the highlight to the last line in the large list box, which contains the "(None)" entry, or any other line that contains a "(None)" entry, by clicking on the correct line. The spin control can also be used to position the highlight to the correct line. Change the "(None)" entries by entering a new value or clicking on the character list box. Press a **Save** button. To add another entry, click on the **New** button to add a new line with the "(None)" entry, and change that additional line. Add as many associations as desired in this manner.

It is often easier to click on the **New Button** several times to create many "(None)" lines. After creating several lines, click on the character list box to place the first character on the first "(None)" line. Then use the spin control to move the highlight down to the next "(None)" line, and once again click on the character list box. Repeat the process until all characters are added. Extra "(None)" boxes or duplicate entries are ignored, so there is no harm in having several "(None)" entries left when pressing a **Save** button.

It is very important to remember that you are always modifying the characters to the last comic which was saved or retrieved, as displayed at the top of the character window. When adding comics, always add the comic first and then click on the characters book icon to add characters (if more than one character is to be associated with the comic).

The Creator Window

Creator associations beyond the first two can be added, changed, or removed using the creator window. Once the window is displayed, all existing associations are displayed, alone with one line which contains no entries.

To remove an entry, position the highlight in the large list box to the association which is to be removed by clicking once on the line containing the entry to be removed.   Then click on the creator type box and change the entry to "(None)".   This can also be accomplished by pressing the space bar to clear the box and then pressing Tab to leave the box.   Repeat the process to change the creator box.   When the Save or Exit/Save buttons are pressed, the old creator association will be removed.

Modifying entries is done in much the same fashion as the removal of entries.   First click to select the association which is to be modified, and then change the creator type and creator box to the correct values, and press one of the Save buttons.

To add one new entry, position the highlight to the last line in the large list box, which contains the two "(None)" entries, or any other line that contains similar entries, by clicking on the correct line.   Change the "(None)" entries by entering new values in or clicking on the creator and creator type boxes until the desired creator type and creator are displayed in their respective boxes.   Press a Save button.   To add another entry, click on the New Button to add a new line with two "(None)" entries, and change that additional line.   Add as many associations as desired in this manner.

Multiple entries can be added, changed, and deleted before the **Save** button is pressed.   The **Save** buttons process all of the window entries, and the **Exit/Save** button processes all entries and then returns to the main window.   The **Cancel** button can be pressed to ignore all window changes since the last time a **Save** button was pressed and return to the main window.

It is very important to remember that you are always modifying the creators to the **last comic which was saved or retrieved,** as displayed at the top of the creator window.   When adding comics, always add the comic first and then click on the creator book icon to add creators (if more than two creators are to be associated with the comic).

Controls

Further information about each of the controls on the main window can be displayed by pressing the corresponding entry below:

Lookup Button
Spin Controls

Book Icons
Folder Icons
Plug-It-In Icons

Previous Button
Next Button
Find Button
Scroll Bar
Add Button
Change Button
Delete Button
Report Button
Exit Button

The previous button displays the previous entry on the database in any of the windows on which it is displayed.   The button may be greyed (not available) if there are no previous records on the database.

The next button displays the next entry on the database in any of the windows on which it is displayed. The button may be greyed (not available) if there are no more records on the database.

The delete button removes a comic or details entry from the database.   The only way to recover a deleted entry without re-entering the information is to immediately re-add the entry while it is still displayed in the window.   A window is displayed after the delete button is pressed to be sure that the operation should really be performed.

Spin controls are used to increment or decrement an associated number by a predefined value. Click repeatedly on the up or down arrow on the control to modify the related value.

The scroll bar on the bottom of the main window is used to roughly position the current comic relative to the beginning and end of the database.   Scroll bars on the list boxes are used to display more entries than can be displayed in the box.   Click on the arrows at the end of the bar for short movements, click inside the bar for longer movements.

The folder icons are used to indicate whether there are notes associated with the comic.   There are general, grading, and miscellaneous notes.   A closed folder indicates there is not a note, an open folder indicates there is.   Clicking on the folder (regardless of state) opens a notes window for adding, changing, or removing notes.

The Find Button

The **Find Button** is used to quickly locate a comic based on the title and number entries currently in the window.   Move to the title box and enter enough of the title to identify the desired comic.   Move to the number box and enter the number, or one smaller than the desired comic.   Click on any of the number type options.   Clicking on the **Find Button** will now move to the first comic which has values larger than those just entered, or to the last comic on the database if there are none.

The Titles Detail Entry Window

The titles details entry window is used to enter title codes and translations.   Each title code can be up to five characters.   The major publisher code can be entered to identify the publisher who publishes all (or most) of the comics within the title.   There are also a first and last number field which will be used in the future to support a report of complete runs.

Entering a Comic's Information

There are several steps to entering a comic's information.

1. Enter the title abbreviation, using the <u>L</u>ookup option if necessary.

The Lookup Button

The lookup button is used to find the titles which begin with the characters currently displayed in the title box.

1. Enter a character or characters which identify the desired title into the title box.

2. Press the Lookup Button.

3. The titles window is displayed.   Position the mouse cursor to one of the titles in the new window and double click.   The code and long title for that entry are placed into the main window.

4. You can use this method to determine if a pre-existing code exists for a title, or if a new code needs to be entered.   Use the Titles Detail Entry window to enter new titles codes.

Support For Comics!

Support for the Comics! software system is currently limited to the hours of 3:00 to 5:30 PM, Central Time, Monday through Saturday.   Please call (314) 928-4380 during those hours, or send a FAX to the same number during non-support hours for a prompt response to any questions about Comics! which you might have.   Call from a location where you can access the Comics! system during the call if possible.

You can also write to us at:

> NewLine Enterprises
> 1373 Cave Springs Estates Drive
> St. Peters MO 63376

Suggestions and comments are always welcomed using any of the above methods.

Another possible source of problem resolution is the section of the user manual entitled "Frequently Asked Questions"

Installation

Installation is performed by running the setup program contained on diskette 1, and then making a modification to a system startup file.

1. Insert the diskette marked as Disk 1 into a floppy drive. Select File Run, and enter **A:\SETUP** or **B:\SETUP** for the file name.

2. Choose the options to install.   Normal installations should check the first two options.

3. Choose where the files are to be placed.   All files are copied, and each disk is prompted for in turn.

4. Choose whether to install new icons.

5. A line must be added to the DOS AUTOEXEC file, if it is not already there.   Select File Run from Windows Program Manager or Norton Desktop, and enter **SYSEDIT** for the file name.   This will display four windows.   Click on the window titled AUTOEXEC.BAT.   At the end of the file, but before any lines which begin with WIN, enter the line <u>SHARE.EXE</u>.   It should be on a line by itself.   Select File Exit from the SYSEDIT window and click on Yes to save the changes to the file. **The computer must be restarted before using Comics!.**

   (The SHARE command may alternatively be executed from the CONFIG.SYS system file. Consult DOS documentation for the correct syntax.)

SHARE.EXE is a part of the DOS operating system which   prevents more than one program from accessing a file at the same time.   This is very important when working under Windows, as many tasks can try to access a file at the same time.   This program is required by the Comics! database.

Detail Entry Windows

The details entry windows are displayed by either positioning the magnifying icon over a list on the main window, selecting the detail menu option for a list, or pressing the control key associated with the detail menu option (such as **Ctrl+T** to display the titles detail entry window).   Each of the details entry windows works in the same fashion, as described in the quick start section of the Comics! user manual.

In addition, the code and positioning windows can be used in tandem to provide quick access to any detail which is on the database.   Begin by entering the first few characters of the desired code in the code box, blanking our the previous entry.   Once an entry is displayed which seems to be close to the desired entry, click on the positioning window entry which   is desired, and that detail is displayed, replacing all of the detail which had been in the window.

The details entry windows include:

> Titles Detail Entry
> Publishers Detail Entry
> Source Detail Entry
> Grades Detail Entry
> Creators and Creator Types Detail Entry
> Characters and Series Detail Entry

The titles details entry window is used to enter title codes and translations.   Each title code can be up to five characters.   The major publisher code can be entered to identify the publisher who publishes all (or most) of the comics within the title.   There are also a first and last number field which will be used in the future to support a report of complete runs.

The publishers details entry window contains only the publisher code and translation.   The publisher code can be up to four characters long.

Sources Detail Entry Window

There are several entries on the sources detail entry window, beginning with the source code and the translation of that code.   The address fields are displayed on orders, and will also be used on want lists and other reports and labels in the future.   The shipping per order and shipping per comic will be used in an enhancement to order processing to automatically calculate the shipping costs as an order is formulated.

The normal discount percentage and sales tax rates are used by both the main window and orders to automatically calculate (plug in) price and sales tax information.   These should be entered as percentages, for example, enter 25 for a twenty five percent discount rather than .25, as a fraction of one hundred percent.   Sales tax can include two decimal points -- 6.75 percent is a valid sales tax rate.

The grading details entry window begins with the order in which the grade should be presented on reports and on the main window drop-down list.   This is a unique whole number.   The grade and grade translation are then entered.   The remaining fields are used to establish how the grade should be valuated, per the grading scheme developed.

Both the creators and creator types detail entry only contain the code and translation at this time.

Characters and series also only contain the code and translation fields at this time.

The Order Windows

The order sub-system of comics is comprised of two windows, an order control window where information common to an entire order is entered, and an order detail window, where the individual items which make up an order are stored.   The order control window is displayed by selecting the Details Orders option from the main window menus.

An order must have a unique combination of source and order date.   The source of the order must have been added using the details entry for sources from the main window.   The address which is printed on the order is also what was entered on the details entry for the source.   Additionally, an order identification number and a comment can be displayed on the first page of the order by entering them on the order control window.

The filing cabinet icon indicates whether there are existing details (order items) for this order.   The bottom drawer is closed if there are no details, and it is open if there are.   Click on this icon to display the order details window.

To enter an order, first enter all of the information on the order control window and press the Add Button. Then click on the filing cabinet icon to display the order details window, and enter the individual items, much as you would add individual comics on the main window.

Checking the non-comics item option removes most of the fields from the window, and allows for entry of other items which you might be ordering at the same time as comics (or you can use this to order only non-comics items, if so desired).   The description will be displayed on the order rather than a title and number as is normal for a comic.

The alternate set radio buttons can be used to enter alternate selections -- second, third, or fourth choices.   Each set of choices is printed on a separate page, and only the first choices are included in the calculation of the costs of the order.

The plug-it-in icons can be used to automatically calculate the price from the cover cost and any discount which is associated with the source, and also to automatically calculate the sales tax from the tax rate associated with the source.

Print an order by clicking on the Print Button.   A window is displayed in which you enter your name and address, and choose optional print fields for the report.   Orders can also be printed from the reporting window by choosing the "Order" report option and entering the source and date on the order parameters window.

The filing cabinet icon is open if there are details for an order, or closed if there are no order details. Click on the filing cabinet icon to enter or modify order details.

Grading Schemes

The nine grade scheme loaded with the installation of Comics! can be changed, and if the value of comics is being kept, the value of a comic can be calculated specifically to a value which is controlled from the grading scheme.   There is not a limit on the number of grades which can be used, though much more than a hundred grades is fairly impractical since all grades are based on percentages.

Each grade in the system is set up as a percentage of either the low, medium, or high value from the window, or an average of two values.   For example, in the pre-loaded condition list, a FN comic is set up to take its value as 100 percent of the medium value entered in the window.   A VF comic, however, is set up to take its value as the average of   the immediately higher and lower grades, which are NM and FN, respectively.

There are also two possible sets of grading values, those for comics which were published before or during a given year and a separate set for those after that same year.   The default year is 1970.   The pre-loaded grading list treats those comics published before or during 1970 slightly differently than those published after that year.   This is because higher grades of those older comics would be worth more than comparable grades of more recent comics.   The year can be adjusted using the Preferences window selected from the main window.

The simplest way to enter a new grading scheme is to first sketch it out in a table.   First define all of the grades which are desired and the order in which they should be displayed, from best condition to worst. The best condition is then given an order code of 1, and the remainder are numbered sequentially to the worst.   Then fill in the valuation columns as percentages of high, medium, or low, or as an average of the two adjacent grades.   Note that an average must not have an average as the next code on either side of it or it will not be valued correctly.   See the user manual for a table containing the default grading scheme.

The current value of comics will be calculated using the percentages assigned to the conditions which are set up in your grading scheme.

To use guide values in which only a single value is assigned to a particular comic, use the single value as the high value for each comic and set up your grading scheme so that each grade is a percentage of the high value.