RecBase© - Record Database

RecBase © by Sea Change Corporation 1993, is a specialized database program designed to help collectors of record albums, tapes, and compact disks keep track of their collections. Information is maintained regarding artist, album title, release date, media, musical style and label.

On-line help is available through the Windows Help Facility. help index items are not arranged in any particular sequence and may be viewed in any order. You can use the scroll bar to view any entries that are not immediately visible in the Help Window.

Information on how to use the Windows Help Facility can also be obtained by pressing the F1 key or by choosing the *How To Use Help* item from the Help Menu.

Highlighting any pull down menu item (use the direction keys) and pressing F1 will display the help information for that menu item.

RecBase has been deigned *and hopefully implemented* to enable it's use under all versions of MS/Windows. It has been tested under Windows 3.0, Windows 3.1, WindowsNT, O/S2, and VPIX (under SCO UNIX). In all cases the product ran properly, except when the system was limited to only 1 MB of memory capacity.

The key functions of RecBase are: Open a database for use
                    Display/edit/search an open database
                    Export data from an open database
                    Append or import saved data to an open database
                    Close a database afteruse
                    Blast a database (used to fix internal database errors)
                    Create a new *empty* database
                    Print database entries
                    Exit RecBase

Information can be displayed in: Display in *Artist* name Order
                    Display in Album Title Order

Command Overview

Open Database

Open an existing **RecBase** Database file for processing or review. A Database file must be opened before a user can begin to use the enclosed data. Only one Database may be open at any given time. When a Database file has been opened, it's name will be displayed in the Windows Banner.

A standard "open" dialog box allows the user to select a Database file. As part of the open procedure, **RecBase** will indicate how many record album entries are currently in the selected Database via an information box.

Once open, **RecBase** enters a stasis state waiting for an additional Database commands to indicate what the next function will be. Generally, the next Database command will be to *Query*, *Export, Import, Print* or *Close* the opened Database.

All **RecBase** Database filenames have the extension *.REL.

For the sake of this document - a *Database* is a collection of related information that includes specific application data fields and a set of associated indices to assist in the rapid location and display of requested data. **RecBase** has a total of 9 data fields and two indices. Data records are always displayed in alphanumeric order, based on the current index selected. **RecBase** allows the user to change the selected index via the *Options* menu.

Query Database

An open **RecBase** Database file results in **RecBase** entering a *stasis* state waiting for further RecBase commands to direct the next functions.

Stasis is a state whereby **RecBase** is in between major functions. After a *Database* has been opened, the application displays the start up dialogue box with the **Open Datebase** item grayed and the **Query Database** item enabled.

During the processing of other application states, users can retreat back to the *Stasis* mode by selecting to return back to the *Stasis* mode.

Logically, the next **RecBase** command will be to *Query, Export, Import, Print* or *Close* the open Database.

If the *Query* function is selected, a new dialog box will appear that displays the fields associated with the **RecBase** Database. Initially each file is blank or in it's default state. Two groups of radio buttons are presented on the right of the screen that allow the user to define what type of musical style and physical medium is represented by any record entry.

If no entries are displayed - this is a new Database and records can be added at this time or Imported via the Import command.

 This *Suspend* button will place the RecBase application in the stasis mode that the application was in after the Database was initally opened. Form this state other system functions can be selected such as *Export, Import, Blast* and *Print*.

 The *Delete* button deletes the currently displayed record from the Database. A

confirming prompt will be made to make sure that this record is to be deleted. Once deleted, the record can no longer be displayed or modified by **RecBase**. The current record pointer will be made to point at the record previous to the deleted one, unless the deleted record was the first record in which case the current record pointer will point at the new first record.

The *Update* button is used to store any changes made to the current record on the screen and will update the Database. The old contents of the record will be replaced with the requested updates. The old record values will be gone. The current record pointer remains the same.

With the *Add* button any changes made to the current record will be used to create a *new* entry in the Database. The entry used as the template regardless of any typed over information will be kept intact, without any modification. The Database record pointer will be adjusted to reflect the position of the added record with regard to the contents of the Database.

The *Find* button displays a dialog very similar to the current record display dialog. The user can enter as much or as little information into the selection dialog as required and when told to *find* will search the database for any matchs. It returns to the standard display dialog but only displays those records that meet the selection criteria. To clear a selection, *find* everything (type **no** information in the search dialog). In this way, *every record will be selected which is the initial startup mode.*Currently, the search is case sensitive. This is an area that might justify enhancement in future **RecBase** releases.

Export Database

Using an existing Open Database *Export* copies the contents of the Database to a standard sequential ASCII file that includes record delimiters thereby retaining special information required to rebuild a **RecBase** Database. The original Database is left in it's initial state and can be continued to be used for *queries, printing* and any other function available to an open Database. The Database remains open after the *export* has completed.

Import Database

A special ASCII exported file can be imported back into the **RecBase** Database format by using the *import* command. Import can import the ASCII file into an empty Database structure or can merge the entries with the entries associated with the open Database.

The export/import functions can be used to speed up database searching by ensuring that the index entries are made contiguous with extraneous pointers eliminated.

Because the import function *rebuilds* the Database indices, the input data must conform with the internal format expected by **RecBase** as created using the export command.

Building Database indices can take several minutes, especially as the size of the Database increases. This causes the indexing processing to become more complex and the internal structure of the Database must be updated and modified to ensure the fastest reasonable *search* response.

Close Database

Closing a **RecBase** Database file makes it unavailable for processing or review until the next Open. A Database file must be reopened before a user can begin to use the enclosed data. Only one Database can be open at any given time. When a Database file has been opened, it's name will be displayed in the Windows Banner.

Create Database

Creating a **RecBase** Database file prepares it for processing and review. A newly created Database file will contain all of the information needed to define the internal Database structure, but will not contain any user data. A newly created Database can have records added following the standard procedure for entering records.

A more practical method of populating a newly created Database is to import data from a previously exported database. This effectively moves data from one Database to another.

All **RecBase** collections will begin with an empty Database and the user will enter record information using the add function until all of the collection has been captured in the Database.

Exit

Exit will terminate the **RecBase** Database application and ensure that all open Databases and files are closed properly as it terminates.

Register

RecBase is distributed as Shareware to several ftp anonymous sites on the Internet and a selected number of BBS' around the country. This software is not free and is not in the public domain. You may use the software as you see fit and you may give copies of the software to friends and acquaintances as long as all of the files are provided and not charge is made over a $5 media recovery. Ownership of the software remains with the copyright holders.

During the operation of RecBase, reminders are made to register the software with Sea Change Corporation. The fee to register the software will be use to create further releases of this work and to grant the user a license to use the software without the reminders.

To register **RecBase** for personal use, contact Sea Change Corporation at the address below:

The cost to register is $35 Canadian and you will immediately receive a serial number and activation key to update your current software. You will not require any new software or to update any of your record database information.

Print Database

This function provides a method to print hard copy information from the **RecBase** Database. It prints the information regarding each the Album Title, Album Artist and Album Label. Multiple page lisings can be generated and hooks are inserted to allow for the cancellation of a print request, prior to completion. The Index field is used to sort the listing as would be expected. The print facility allows you to select what printer you wish to use, and how you want to have the printer setup (if the selected printer allows special setup options).

Blast Database

A colourful name for an important *housekeeping* function. This special function is used when a Database starts giving internal errors, such as too many users, or too many locked records... Blast will reset the internal structures of the Database without destroying the data contents of the Database. If this command must be used often, contact *Sea Change Corporation* to discuss the problem in more detail. This might be an indication a larger and more damaging problem.

Other Options

Index By Artist

This is a mode setting whereby all *future* Database records will be displayed in a sorted order as defined by the *full* artist's name. For example: **"The Beatles"** will be displayed the under the **"T"**s and not under the **"B"**s.

Index By Album

This is a mode setting whereby all *future* Database records will be displayed in a sorted order as defined by the *full* album name.