•• Using the on-line help ••

The help module consists of two lists. The list on the left, contains the topics. User can select a topic by scrolling up or down and clicking in the desired subject. The list on the right would display the help text associated with the list item selected. The help window can be dragged around by click-dragging in the title bar. User can quit the help module by clicking the go-away box on the top left corner of the help window.

•• About DictationMachine ••

From the Author of MicroRecorder™, AudioClock™, MicroRecorder Pro™ VoiceCalendar™, and Focus TeleContact™, Focus DictationMachine™ is functionally equivalent to a transcribing device. It allows continuous background recording and playback of sound from hard disk. This would allow you to work with other programs while the sound is being recorded or played in the background. Among the key features of the DictationMachine are:

*- Full asynchronous Record and playback of sound.
*- 100 percent user configurable voice activated recording (VOX).
*- Supports Apple Events.
*- Supports AppleTalk and connection to remote sites.
*- Online/off-line help module.
*- Full system 7 balloon help support.
*- Drag and drop capability.
*- Support for 3:1 and 6:1 compression of the recorded sound.
*- Fast forwarding and rewinding of sound being played.
*- Volume adjustment.
*- Pitch adjustment.
*- Threshold adjustment.
*- Delay adjustment.
*- Elapsed and remaining time display in hundredth of second accuracy.
*- Bar indicator for the portion of sound played.
*- Quick Skip feature allowing to instantly to jump to any section of tape.
*- Pausing and stopping capabilities.
*- Audio Selection and selection display.
*- Repeated play.
*- Insert and remove any portion of tape with a click of mouse.
*- Miniaturizing windows for saving desktop space.
*- Excellent 3D graphical interface and animation!
*- Full utilization of the notification manager.

*- Real-time sound display for record and playback states!!

•• System Requirements ••

    • Hardware: 68020, 68030, or 68040 or Power PC Macintosh. (Any LC, Powerbook, Quadra, Centris, Performa, families of Macintosh computers.)

    • Color or gray scale monitor (256 colors or 16 level gray scale recommended).

    • System 7 and higher.

    • Sound manager 3.0 for best results.

    • 350 K of free memory.

    • Apple built in or third party microphone for recording sound.

•• Quick jump feature

when the mouse cursor is move on top of the progress bar (located directly below the real-time digital display), the cursor changes to a marker (from its original arrow shape) indicating it is ready to select a location. If the mouse button is clicked anywhere in the progress bar when the marker is presented, any action (play, fast forward, and rewinding) is stopped and playback is initiated from that point in tape. However, if the user is recording, this marker would not be presented. Therefore, when recording, user must first stop the tape before the marker is available for use.

•• Adding in a sound segment

It is often needed to edit in a segment of recorded sound into an already recorded tape. This tape addition capability allows the user to simply modify the tape rather than recording the entire content all over again to include the changes needed. For example, if the recorded sound is "One...Two...Three...Four", user can modify it to "One... Two... Hello... Three... Four". If the "Add" option is not selected, the tape would be overwritten

and it would be something like "One... Two... Hello... Four" which would overwrite the word "Three".

To add in (edit in) a new segment into an already recorded tape , the following two steps must be taken:

   1) Rewind fast forward, or play to the location and then mark where on the tape the new portion should be inserted by either clicking on the "Add" button or selecting the "Add" option in the "Edit" menu. The add button would begin flashing indicating that tape addition has been initiated and recording begins.

   2) After the new portion has been recorded, user can stop addition by either clicking on the "Add" button or selecting the "Add" option in the "Edit" menu. Recording stops and the "Add" button would stop flashing indicating that tape addition has stopped.

•• Removing a sound segment

It is often needed to remove a segment of recorded sound from an already recorded tape. This tape removal capability allows the user to simply modify the tape rather than recording the entire content all over again to include the changes needed. For example, if the recorded sound is "One...Two...Three...Four", user can modify it to "One...Two...Four" erasing the word "Three".

To remove (erase) a segment from an already recorded tape , the following two steps must be taken:

   1) Mark the beginning of the portion to be erased. This is done by simply rewind, fast forward, or play to the point of desire and clicking the erase button or selecting "Erase" item in the "Edit" menu. The erase button would begin flashing indicating that tape eraser has been initiated.

   2) Rewind, fast forward, or play to another point in tape and mark the end of erase selection by either clicking the erase button or selecting the "Erase" from the "Edit" menu.

The start point and end point for erase could be any where on the tape. Start point does not have to be smaller that the end point. For example, the start of erase could be marked at 12.29 seconds elapsed and the end

point could be marked at 3.09 seconds elapsed. The erase process will automatically take care of the ends of the range and that portion of the tape is removed from the tape.

•• Compression Levels ••

Dictation Machine allows the user to select a to select the desired compression level at the time a tape is created. Compressing and decompressing of the tape is done transparently and once the desired level is selected, user never has to do anything and everything is done automatically thereafter. Compressing the recorded sound would help to save disk space. At 22 KHz sampling rate, with no compression each second of recorded sound will take approximately 22k of disk space. With 3 to 1 compression one second of sound will take 7.6k of space and at 6 to 1 compression only requires 3.8k of disk space. The disk space used to store a tape is greatly reduced through compression, however the compression process will somewhat reduce the fidelity of sound recorded. The 3 to 1 compression offers a compromise between disk space and quality of sound.

•• Drag and drop feature ••

The Focus DictationMachine fully supports the drag and drop feature of system 7. This would allow the user to simply drag a tape on to the application for processing. Since only one tape can be open at any time, dropping more than one tape would result in the first tape in the group to be opened only.

•• Balloon help ••

The Focus DictationMachine fully supports the balloon help feature of system 7. To activate the balloon help, either select "Show Balloons" from the finder's help menu or select "Balloon Help" from DictationMachine's "Display" menu.

•• Menus:

This section contains the descriptions for the following menus:
   - Apple Menu
   - File Menu
   - Edit Menu
   - Sound Menu
   - Tape Menu
   - Display Menu

•• Apple Menu ••

Use this menu to access Apple menu items or obtain information about the DictationMachine.   The on-line help module can also be accessed through this menu.

• About •
This menu item to learn more about the DictationMachine Application.

• Help •
Use this menu item to activate the on-line help module. This module has extensive help text describing various features of the DictationMachine and how to fully utilize them.

•• File Menu ••

Use this menu to perform operations related to disk, file, printer, windows, or to quit the application.

• New... •
To create a new blank tape, simply choose this menu item and select various options such as sampling rate, compression ratio and whether or not you wish the tape to be standalone.

• Open... •
This menu item allows the user to open a previously recorded tape for playback or modification. User may also simply drag the tape onto the DictationMachine to open it for use.

• Save As... •

Use this menu item to save a backup of the current tape under a different name or location. This feature makes it easy to have several versions of the tape. That way after making certain modifications, user can simply step back to an older version if they are not happy with the changes.

• Close •
Use this menu item to unload or close the currently loaded tape. After closing the currently open tape, user can then open another tape or create a new tape to work with.

• Quit •
This menu item can be used to quit DictationMachine application and return to the Finder.

•• Edit Menu ••

Items in this menu can be used to modify or manipulate the recorded sound.

The Undo, Cut, Copy, Paste, and Clear item are not currently used by DictationMachine and are provided for use with Apple Menu Items (Desk Accessories) only.

• Add •
Use this menu item to edit in (add) a sound portion any length in to a pre-recorded tape. When this item is selected, it would be marked to indicate that the tape addition has been initiated. User can also select the "Add" button from the main window to achieve the same effect. See the topic "Adding in a sound segment" for more details.

• Erase •
User can use this menu item to delete (erase) a sound portion of any length from a pre-recorded tape. When this item is selected, it would be marked to indicate that the tape eraser has been initiated. See the topic "Removing a sound segment" for more details.

• Make Standalone •
This menu item allows users to create a standalone tape which can be played by it self and would not require the DictationMachine to play on other computers. When sending another person a tape that you created, this feature allows them to have access to all playback features of the

program without the requirement of having their own copy of the DictationMachine. The tape however, can only be played back and could not be edited by the recipient of the tape unless they have the full version of the DictationMachine available.

• Capture Settings •
Use this menu item to adjust preferences for playback and recording features of the current tape. Once this menu item is selected, every time "Reset" button is pressed, the setting would return to these settings. The setting that are recorded for future use are the delay, volume, threshold, and sensitivity values.

• Capture Defaults •
Use this menu item to adjust preferences for playback and recording features of DictationMachine. Once this menu item is selected, all proceeding tapes created would use the settings at the time of selection. The setting that are recorded for future tapes are the delay, volume, threshold, and sensitivity values.

•• Sound Menu ••

Use the items in this menu to adjust various characteristics of the sound recording and playback. The following describes various user adjustable parameters allowing the users to customize the DictationMachine to their individual needs.

• Master Volume •
Use this menu item to adjust the computer's main output volume. This option modifies the settings used by all applications currently running (including DictationMachine). This overall control can be used to reduce the system beep sound or sounds being created by any other program employing audio output feature. Additionally, the application allows the user to alter the settings used by DictationMachine only which is described in the next section.

• Volume •
Use this menu item to adjust the DictationMachine's output volume. The changes made through this menu item effect only the audio output behavior of the DictationMachine. This parameter can also be adjusted to the desired value using the volume up and down keys in the main display.

To learn how to change the master volume see the previous section.

• Sensitivity •
Use this menu item to adjust the DictationMachine's sensitivity level (threshold) for voice activated recording. The sensitivity parameter determines the loudness level which would trigger the DictationMachine's recording feature once in record mode. The advantage of this feature is the ability to avoid pauses and silence between spoken words which take unnecessary extra disk space. The values are from 0 to 100. The zero value would cause any sound that is detected to be recorded. The 100 value would cause the recording to be activated on extremely loud noise which meet or exceed the maximum possible. An intermediate value, for example 40, would cause all sound with loudness below 40 percent of maximum to be ignored. This threshold feature allows the users to customize the DictationMachine to the environment in with it is being operated. The background noise (i.e. computer's fan, office equipment, personal stereo, keyboard clicks etc.) can be eliminated by adjusting the threshold. The sensitivity level controls the recording behavior in recording mode only.   If the user is playing, stopping, pausing, rewinding or fast forwarding, this parameter would have no effect. The pop-up menu allows quick setting from 0 to 100 in steps of ten. The sensitivity up and down buttons in the main window allow fine tuning in steps of one percent.

• Delay •
Use this menu item to adjust the DictationMachine's delay time for voice activated (VOX) recording. The delay parameter describes the time that DictationMachine waits before recording is stopped after the loudness has fallen below threshold. To illustrate the need for this feature let us look at a word such as "Stop" where the "ST" have more emphasis than the "OP" portion. When the word "stop" is used in normal conversation, the "op" portion is slightly pronounced at a lower level than the "ST". If the delay is set at a relatively low value and threshold is set above the level at which "op" is spoken, it would be cut off. For example a sentence such as "....Please stop at..." could be recorded as "...please sto at...". By having control of the delay and sensitivity parameters, users can customize DictationMachine to their way of speaking. The pop-up menu allows adjustment of the delay value from 0 to 1 second in steps of 0.10 second (100 milliseconds). The delay value can also be adjusted using the delay up and down buttons in the main window. The delay up and down buttons in the main window allow fine tuning in steps of 0.01 second (10 milliseconds).

• Playback Rate •
Use this menu item to adjust the DictationMachine's playback rate (pitch) for playback.   If the spoken words were to quick or too fast for user's typing speed, the pitch of the sound could be lowered to a desirable value. Alternatively, if the speed of the spoken word were too slow, speed of playback could be increased to save typing time. The pop-up menu provides adjustment of the rate from 50 to 175 percent (in steps of 25 percent) of the speed at which the sound was recorded. Additionally, the playback rate could be adjusted using the rate up and down buttons in the main window in steps of one percent.

• Button Clicks •
The clicks are provided for user feedback. Use "Button Clicks" menu item to able/disable the click sound associated with clicking buttons and controls. When the DictationMachine is controlled from inside another application, these clicks would provide the user with an audio feedback which would indicate the course of action requested has been taken. However, during business meetings or a quite work environment, it may be desirable to mute these clicks. Once the clicking sound is disabled, it would remain disabled until the application has restarted or the menu item is selected again.

•• Tape Menu ••

Use this menu to control the DictationMachine or obtain information about the tape currently loaded. The following describes various controls allowing the users to alter the DictationMachine's playback and record behavior.

• Tape Info •
Use this menu item to obtain information about the currently loaded tape. Upon selection, the characteristics such as tape's name, sampling rate, compression ratio, sampling resolution, standalone status, total size in bytes and total record time in seconds are displayed.

• Repeat •
Use this menu item to start playback of the sound after it has reached the end (auto replay).

• Reset •
Use this menu item to reset all applicable parameters to their default values. To set the default values to be used in conjunction with this menu item, see the description for "Capture Settings" and "Capture Preferences" items descriptions in the Edit menu.

• Record •
Use this menu item to start voice activated recording. If prior to selecting this menu item the DictationMachine was in playback, rewinding or fast forwarding mode, it would stop the tape, reset the related parameters and begin the recording process.

• Play •
Use this menu item to start playback from disk. If prior to selecting this menu item the DictationMachine was in recording, rewinding or fast forwarding mode, it would stop the tape, reset the related parameters and begin the playback process.

• Fast Forward •
Use this menu item to fast forward the tape. If prior to selecting this menu item the DictationMachine was in recording, rewinding or playing mode, it would stop the tape, reset the parameters and begin the fast forwarding process.

• Rewind •
Use this menu item to rewind the tape. If prior to selecting this menu item the DictationMachine was in recording, fast forwarding or playing mode, it would stop the tape, reset the parameters and begin the rewinding process.

• Stop •
Use this menu item to stop recording, playback, rewinding, or fast forwarding.

• Pause •
Use this menu item to pause recording or playback of the tape.

• Skip To Start •
Use this menu item to quickly move to the beginning of the tape. Once selected, any playback, recording, fast forwarding or rewinding would be stopped and the tape would return to the beginning.

• Skip To Start •

Use this menu item to quickly move to the end of the tape. Once selected, any playback, recording, fast forwarding or rewinding would be stopped and the tape would return to the end.

•• Display Menu ••

Use this menu to control the characteristics of the DictationMachine for display related settings.

• Playback Display •
Use this menu item to activate/deactivate real time playback display. When in playback mode, the digital display portion of the main window displays the actual sound being played in real time. By selecting or deselecting this item user can optionally turn on or off this display. If the tape was recorded with compression however, this item is disabled. Due to overwhelming amount of CPU time required for real-time decompression and display to occur concurrently, the display of compressed sound in real time is not supported. Supporting such feature will greatly effect overall performance of the computer, resulting in a general slow down of other programs running.

• Record Display •
Use this menu item to activate/deactivate real time record display. When in record mode, the digital display portion of the main window displays the actual loudness and selected threshold for the sound being recorded in real time. By selecting or deselecting this item user can optionally turn on or off this display.

• Level Indicator •
Use this menu item to activate/deactivate the record level indicator. In the record mode, the record level is indicated in the main screen in form of a bar. This option is selected at start up (default) and can be turn on/off by the user thereafter using this menu item.

• Menu Bar Notifications •
Use this menu item to activate/deactivate notification in the menu bar. The current state of the DictationMachine is displayed by a flashing icon over the apple icon (top left corner of screen) when this option is selected. This option is selected at start up (default) and can be controlled by the user thereafter using this menu item.

• Shrink •

Use this menu item to iconize the main window to preserve desktop space and reveal windows of other applications running.

• Expand •

Use this menu item to increase the DictationMachine's main window size to reveal all controls and displays.

• Balloon Help •

DictationMachine fully supports the system 7 balloon help feature. Use this menu item to activate/deactivate the balloon help. Once this option is selected, the balloon help is activated for DictationMachine and any other application running. Users can also activate the balloon help by selecting "Show Balloons" option in the help menu of the system 7 from the finder.

• Keyboard Controls •

Use this menu item to view the keyboard controls which allow you to control the DictationMachine from inside other applications. Upon selection, user is presented with a dialog which would displays and animate the method for use of the keyboard control feature. The keyboard controls allow the user to stop, play, record, fast forward, and rewind the tape from inside any application.   This feature take away the cumbersome task of switching application just to control the DictationMachine's actions. Additionally, since the keyboard control is done in a unique way internally, there is no need for a startup (extension or INIT) program which may cause conflict with system programs.

• Brightness •

This submenu allows the user to adjust the brightness of the display elements in the main window. Depending on depth of color or shades of gray available on the computer that the DictationMachine is running on, the readability of the digital displays can be increased by adjusting the brightness. The default value for the brightness is 1. If the DictationMachine is running on a black and white display, the default values are setup automatically to white.

•• Windows ••

This section describes various windows of the DictationMachine.   The windows described in this section are:

- Miniature Window
- Help Window
- Main Window

•• Miniature Window ••

From the main window, user can activate this window which allows the user to save precious desktop space. Furthermore, since other application can be used concurrently with DictationMachine, miniaturizing the main window would give other application more processing time. User can return to the main window by pressing the expand button. User can drag the miniature window around the desktop by clicking-dragging anywhere in the window except the expand button.

•• Help Window ••

This window contains all the on-line help text available for the application. The window is a standard Macintosh application window with two sections. First section is the topics and the second is the text associated with the topic. User can activate the on-line help module by selecting the "Help" menu item from the apple menu. See the "How to use the on-line help" section on more details on the usage.

•• Main Window ••

The following describes all of the elements in the main window of the DictationMachine.

• Close Box •
By clicking in this box which is located in top left corner of the main window, you can close the currently loaded tape.

• Title window •
The name of the tape currently loaded is displayed in the top right corner of the main window. If no tape is loaded, it would indicate that user must either create anew tape or open a tape previously created.

• Drag Region •
Using this region with series of horizontal lines, user can drag the window

around the desktop to reveal underlying windows of other applications.

• Shrink/Expand •
Using this box located on the top right corner of the main window to shrink the main window to make more desktop space visible and reveal windows of other applications..

• Volume •
Current volume level selected for the playback of sound is displayed in the digital display portion. The volume setting (range of values are 0 to 100 percent) can be adjusted by the up (+) and down (-) buttons below the volume display.

• Sensitivity •
Current sensitivity level selected for the recording of sound is displayed in the digital display portion. The sensitivity setting (range of values are 0 to 100 percent) can be adjusted by the up (+) and down (-) buttons below the sensitivity display.

• Rate •
Current rate (pitch) value selected for the playback of sound is displayed in the digital display portion. The rate setting (range of values are 0 to 400 percent) can be adjusted by the up (+) and down (-) buttons below the rate display.

• Delay •
Current Delay selected for stop of the recording of sound is displayed in the digital display portion. The delay setting (range of values are 0 to 1 second) can be adjusted by the up (+) and down (-) buttons below the delay display.

• Remaining •
In the record mode this portion displays the amount of time available for recording (based on hard disk space). In playback mode it indicates remaining portion of the recorded sound.

• Elapsed •
This display shows the current time elapsed when in playback mode, and the recorded time in the record mode.

• Rewind •
This control button can be used to rewind the tape to a desired position while hearing an audio feedback which can aid in the selection process.

• Play •
Initiate playback using this control button.

• Fast Forward •
This control button can be used to advance the tape to a desired position while hearing an audio feedback which can aid in the selection process.

• Record •
Use this control button to initiate recording to tape.

• Pause •
Use this control button to either pause recording or playback.

• Stop •
Use this control button to either stop recording or playback.

• Level Indicator •
This bar is the record level indicator. The values below threshold are in red and the above threshold values are in blue (in gray scale light and dark gray respectively).

• Sound Display •
When recording this portion displays the current record level and threshold. In playback mode, this portion displays the actual sound being played in real-time.

• Progress Display •
This portion displays the completed versus remaining time of either recording, playback, or tape editing in progress. You can also use this portion to quickly jump to any point in the tape by simply clicking in it. See the "Quick jump feature" for more details.

• Erase •
Use this button to select and erase a portion of the recorded sound. See the "Removing a sound segment" section for more details.

• Add •
Use this button to add a sound in to an already recorded sound. See the "Adding in a sound segment" section for more details.

• Help •

This button would activate the on-line help module which has more detailed descriptions of the various features of the DictationMachine than offered with the balloon help windows.

• Skip To Start (left) •
Use this button to make a quick skip to the beginning of the tape.

• Skip To End (right) •
Use this control button to make a quick skip to the end of the tape.

• Open •
Select this button to be presented with a dialog which allows you to select a tape to open for playback and recording.

• New •
Using this button you can create a new blank tape for recording.

• Reset •
Click this button to return volume, rate, sensitivity, and delay to the values selected in the preferences settings. See the description for the "Reset" item in the "Tape" menu for more details.

• Repeat •
Selecting this button would cause the playback to start again from the beginning of the tape once it reaches the end (auto replay).

•• Warranty/Liability ••

This software is released on an "AS IS" basis. The author provides no warranty of any sort. The user of this software assumes complete responsibility for any direct or indirect damages due to use or misuse of this software. This program including but not limited to the code is copyrighted by Focus Softworks and Afshin Latifi and is NOT public domain (strictly enforced). It may not be disassembled, reverse engineered, redistributed, copied or modified.

•• How to reach the author ••

Please E-Mailed questions, comments, bug reports to:

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or by Mail to the address displayed in the introductory screen.

•• Commercial and Shareware Distribution ••

This or any of other works of this author shall not be distributed without prior written consent of the author (strictly enforced). Requests for distribution can be submitted to the address displayed in the introductory window. Only signed official request would be considered.

•• Other Focus Softworks products ••

The following are the list of products at the time of release of this version of Focus DictationMachine™:

• MicroRecorder™-
        - Is a sound player which allows background sound playback on any Macintosh with color capability in AIFF format. It features unlimited record and play back time, repeated playback, on-line help, volume adjustment, and audio selection. The audio selection allows the user to play back a portion or the entire sound. This program has three dimensional controls, animation, and digital display featuring playback time, audio selection, volume level.

• MicroRecorder Pro™-
        - Based on the popular MicroRecorder, the pro version has the same features with the addition of pitch control, REAL TIME! display of the sound, Stereo capability, and left/right channel control. Furthermore, MicroRecorder Pro supports AIFF, system 7 sound file, and PC/Windows wave format. The support for PC/Windows format allows the user to import their favorite sound from the other platform.

• AudioClock™-
        - Is a digital Alarm Clock. It is a Clock for people who appreciate

efficiency. It allows the user to enter daily messages by specifying the time, occasion, recording the voice message and save with clicks of mouse all without typing a word!. User can also preview the messages using their mouse.

• VoiceCalendar™-
        - Is a digital calendar. First of its kind, it is a calendar for people who hate to type! or people who appreciate efficiency. It allows the user to enter daily messages by specifying the date, time, occasion, recording the voice message and save with clicks of mouse all without typing a word!. User can also view the entire month, select any date and play back any messages using their mouse.

Look for these on America Online, your favorite bulletin boards and the Internet.

For latest version information or questions see "How to reach the Author" section.

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