

The Splash Program and other Utilities

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These are generally used only by Carousel technicians.	
Access2Sql – convert an access database to a sql server database	
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A. The Splash Program itself.



This program was generated because some clients were unhappy with seeing a bunch of horsey icons spread all over their screen. Also, I have been generating more utility programs, and it has been getting difficult to populate the screen with all the stuff that the client needed. I wanted a consistent way to display the documentation. So I came up with a program whose sole function is to launch other programs. This program will generally be labeled “Carousel Software” on the client’s screen, but internally it is known as the Splash screen.



The icons currently available are: all the major Carousel programs (Inventory, Deal, Quick Quote, Self Finance, Admin) and the Salesmen versions; Documentation for the major programs; Latest set of changes to the programs; And some of the various Utility programs that have been spread around.

The middle part is devoted to documentation. It contains all the documentation that I have written for these manuals. Select a document name and click the book icon to its left. That will bring up the Adobe reader and then display the content you selected. If you want to see a downloaded form from a government web site, select the Forms option. You can also select some Government documents that may be of interest other than forms.

This screen can be moved around the screen and repositioned as desired. Where ever you last left it, is where it will reappear next time you bring it back. You launch any program by single clicking on the icon. If you double click, only one instance of the program will launch. The splash screen itself will either remain visible, or minimize itself, depending on the state of the “minimize on shell” checkbox in the upper right hand corner.

Any of these icons can be made invisible by double clicking the Carousel Software title. That will show a checkbox on each icon which, if clicked, will make the icon invisible. All the icons can also be moved around. Grab the Bottom of an icon with the mouse, and drag it to an unused part of the screen.

To get the screen back to initial conditions, hold down the Left Shift Key on the keyboard when you launch the program. If that does not work, click the Default button on the upper right, restart splash, and all the icons should be in their default location.

Over time, more functions will be added to this screen.

The following sections will describe the functions of the utility programs that can be accessed from this screen.

S-I. Envelope Addresser

This started out as a request from a client to simply have a computerized way to address envelopes. For five bucks I could grab a program off the internet that would do this, but I thought that it would be much more useful if I could just get the address information out of the Customer Database, since probably most of the letters you would want to send are to recent customers.



This new program allows you to either use an existing Customer name in the database, or to create a new name and address and optionally save that into the database. I currently do not process the Vendor database, but you can add vendor information to the Customer database also. Just be sure the Company checkbox is checked. It looks pretty much like the Customer Entry screen in the Deal Program. Of course, it should, since I lifted this function pretty much from that Customer Entry screen.

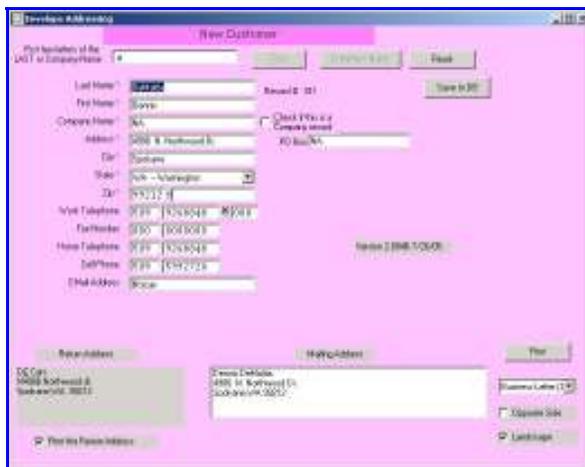


This new program will show the screen at the left on startup. You can select an existing customer, or enter a new one.

This screen also looks a lot like the Customer Entry screen, except that only some of the data is needed. When you select a name, or start building a new name, the return address and the mailing address show what will be printed at the bottom of the screen.

If you are building a new entry, you will have the ability to save it to the database, so that this entry can be retrieved at a later date. Click on the Save to DB button to do this.

When you have selected or built your address, click on the Print button to actually print the on an envelope. There are currently three envelope types defined, a #10 business size envelope, the shorter #6 check size envelope, and a Postcard size. At some later date I might add address labels, so that you can put an address on a large package.



You have several options available.

First, you can decide to NOT print the return address (by Unchecking the “print return address” checkbox). This would be useful if you have already return-addressed envelopes, for instance. Or preprinted return address stickers.

The envelope by default will be printed in

Landscape format. That is, you put the envelope in the printer sideways. Which side rather depends on the printer itself. The Okidata will by default print the information on the right side of the printer, and the HP printers for some reason (different print drivers, I guess) will print the information on the left side of the printer. However, some HP printers will only physically accept an envelope on the right side. So if this is the case, that is, you want the envelope to be put into the opposite side of the printer's default side, you can check the Opposite Side checkbox. We have also found some printers that want to print the envelope in the Center, so that is an option now also.

Long (#10) envelopes will not fit in most printers with their long side across the printer, which is why the default printing is Landscape. However, short envelopes will fit this way, and you can Uncheck the Landscape checkbox to allow these envelopes to be printed Portrait. The typefonts generally look better this way, and I would do all of them this way if only the envelopes fit in the printer that way.

We also can now fill in the Fedex Airbill thing that you attach to Fedex packages.

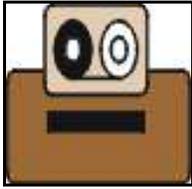
When you click the Print button, you will get the standard "which printer" dialog box popping up to select a printer. I would suggest using an inkjet or laser printer, if one is available. The Okidata printers seem to smudge the writing, at least in Landscape mode, and the fonts are not as nice.

S-II. Change Logger



I have added a table in the database that lets me keep a log of changes that I have made to a customer's system. This also lets the customer put down a log of problems or suggestions that they find. I will see this the next time I come to visit. All entries are timestamped. Use the special Change Log program to enter this information. All entries must fit on one (100 character) line. Sort of like a Tweet.

S-III. Backup



With version 2.010, this is a program rather than the earlier Bat file. When the program comes up, it will show you exactly where the database is located, and what potential devices exist to send the backup to. It will try to select a USB memory stick for the backup, but you can select one of the other things that it found. This solves the problem of extra devices throwing off the mapping sequence for the fixed in place bat file. Note that it only writes to the root of the device. A “Running” flag will come on when it is copying the data to the backup device, and a “Finished” flag will show at the end. By default it will rename the old backup file and create a new one, but you can have it overwrite the old file.



The program now has the option to generate a fully qualified path to any directory on any device that the computer can see. So you are no longer forced to store things at the root level of a disk, for instance. Enter the full directory path in the entry box at bottom center, select the radio button to the left, and click Save.

For Sql Server databases, it is a two step operation. On those systems, you will see a red button overlaying the above icon. You cannot copy a Sql Server database the way you can an Access database. First you have to create a Sql Server backup. The red button does that and then becomes invisible. Then you can follow the above procedure to copy the generated backup file to your memory stick.

If you run the Sql Server backup with a command line of “S”, it will run without anybody having to click any buttons. That way the backup can be scheduled. (The Command Line follows the execution command). Note that if you create a batch file to run this program with the command line, that you can schedule it with the task scheduler. (That will be found in the Administrative Tools section of the Control Panel.)

The program presumes that the backup folder is c:\auto\bk from SQL SERVER’s point of view. In rare cases, it is not. To fix that, create a file named bk.txt which contains the actual path (again, from Sql Server’s point of view). Store this file into the actual backup folder on the server.

S-IV. Sync Program



The Sync program was written to allow easier updating of changes to a networked system. Generally, when I do an update at a client site, or even remotely via Teamviewer, I deal directly with the server, the computer that contains the database for the site. If I think about it, I will run around to the other workstations at the site and update them too. But generally people are on them and I hate to disturb them for any length of time.

This program will synchronize a workstation with its server or the server with a master file on a flashdrive or even by FTP. By default it only syncs the \bin folder (and its subfolders). It does NOT touch the database. If the Server checkbox is checked, it will then sync the rest of the data folders, ignoring the DB folder. It will put up a screen that shows the Copy From and Copy To folders, and will checkmark which of the files in the FROM folder are newer than (or missing in) the TO folder. (It also checkmarks those files in the TO folder that are missing from the FROM folder, but that is informational only.)



The user can change the drives by putting in a different path in the entry boxes. Or he can force some files to be updated by checkmarking them in the FROM list. He can also uncheck files that were checked by the program.

Finally, he clicks the DoIt button, and the checked files are copied to the TO folder.

When the program first runs, it makes its best guess as to what folders the From and To areas are. If it guesses wrong, then you can change the folder names in the top entry boxes. If the user changes the default From and To files, there is a button named Rebuild that you can click that will make these new selections the default in the future.

Older versions of the program used a file named sync.txt on \Auto. It was formatted as follows:

```
SYNC -f e:\auto -t M:\auto
```

Where SYNC is required, in caps.

-f is where the master copy of the files are, where they are to be copied From.

-t is where the files are to be copied To.

The latest version of this program will update itself. That is not an easy trick. It has to run some other program to do that, since a program cannot overwrite itself while it is running. You will get a popup message asking if you want to update the sync program. If you answer yes, a screen will pop up showing you the from and to, and if you say OK, the syncfolder program will be updated.

Note that are several options on this screen.

- If you check Server, then all folders are selected. This should be done for updating a server only.
- If you check Forms Readonly, then when you click the Doit button, existing forms on the server will NOT be overwritten.
- If you also check the button to the Right of Forms Readonly, then Non Active forms will be overwritten, but not Active forms. This prevents updating forms that are set up, because often an updated form will mess up the registration. You should copy down these form numbers so that when you DO overwrite them (uncheck everything) you can go and test them.

If you enter “ftp” in the FROM box, the program will now update the workstation or server from the Carousel server over the internet. This should always be the Latest & Greatest versions of the software. Also, if the download will take a huge amount of time, you can just let this crank overnight. This could help when setting up a remote system, or a replacement computer.

The Compress button will delete from the From display all the unchecked files.

Note that on the Splash screen, there is a U button as part of the Sync icon. This button is a shortcut to bring up the Update Files program, which is generally needed right after running the Sync program.

S-V Update Forms Tables



When you load a bunch of new forms into the system, generally using the Sync program, you still have to get the database to know that they are there. This program, launched by clicking the U in the corner of the Sync program icon, will do that. Two of the files generally downloaded to the system are FT.text and RT.text. These files contain the descriptions of all the forms, and all the reports that are available.

When the Update Forms program comes up, you can click either the Update Forms or Update Admin Reports buttons. There are four options available to you.

- List all files being processed
- list exception being processed – the default
- Only add new items, and indicate items that should be deleted – the default
- Delete items that no longer exist

It will delete (or report) any forms or reports that are no longer supported, and add in the forms and reports that have been generated since the last time this program was run. All forms will be established initially as inactive, but new reports will be established as active, so that all my clients will eventually know that the new report exists. You will then have to use the Admin program to Activate whatever forms your particular system needs.

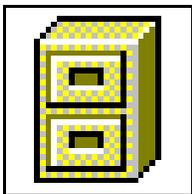
S-VI Teamviewer



Teamviewer is a program that I purchased and have the rights to distribute to my clients. It allows me to dial in over the internet and take over your computer to help you fix any problems that you might be having. I cannot get in without you first clicking the Teamviewer horsey. This will pop up a dialog box that contains an ID and a password. You will have to tell me those values. Only then can I make the connection.

S-VII. ODBC Switcher

Can I have several companies hosted on one computer?



We have provided a program that will let you switch databases on a computer. We presume that all the databases live on the same server, and that they are all Access databases. Using the ODBC Switcher program, you will see a list of all the databases on your system. Click on the one you want, and click on the Switch button. If you minimize this program, the icon tells you which database you are using. Note that you cannot do this when other Carousel programs are

running on your system – you will get a warning. All Carousel programs must be pointing to the same database from an individual workstation. A file named odbc.txt must be in the \Auto directory for the ODBC program to find it. This file contains the full paths of mdb files that need to be switched. Note that this program does not work in non Admin Windoz 7 and later because of their increased security. It will work if you are running in full Admin space, and run the program as Administrator.

B. Utility Programs not part of Splash

The following utilities for now are not part of the Splash program, although they may be moved there at a later time.

U-I. Inventory Downloader

We have had several instances where a client has two or more sites. There are two obvious ways to handle this: either each store can have its own database, or the two stores can run off one database, with the two stores being connected by a VPN network. Deciding which way to go depends on the individual car lot's needs. If you go with option 2, a VPN network, then you can use the Location Code field to indicate which lot the vehicle currently exists at.

Each store having its own database is certainly the simplest and cheapest way to go of the two options. However, from time to time, a dealer will want to move a vehicle from lot A to lot B, either to give things a fresh look, or because lot B sold a car that was physically at lot A. This means that lot B needs to add the vehicle to its inventory.

We have a function that solves most but not all of this problem.

1. Lot A would run Admin report 1120. This generates a file of information named Inventory.txt in the c:\temp folder.
2. Somehow send this file (via floppy, CD, or email it) to Lot B.
3. Lot B would store this file onto its c:\temp folder.
4. Lot B then runs program Add1InvPj.exe found in \Auto\bin. This brings up a screen listing all the vehicles exported from Lot A. You can choose any one of these vehicles. An entry box will be displayed where you indicate what its stock number should be in the Lot B inventory. After you enter that stock number, all the information for that vehicle will be imported into the Lot B inventory database.

What is missing, is somebody needs to go back to Lot A's inventory and, using the Admin screen, delete this lot from their database. I do not have an automated way to handle this at this time. If you do not do this, then lot A's inventory will become corrupted over time, showing a bunch of vehicles in its inventory that no longer exist.

Having said all that, NOBODY has ever used it, and some day I will just blow it away.

U-II. Log Display



A few years ago, I modified the inventory, deal and quick quote programs to log all the changes that were made to a stock number. The initial entry was not logged, only the changes to that initial entry. This has been very useful to help figure out why some funny thing seems to happen to a particular deal.

Logging is of no use if you cannot pull out this information when you need it. That program is on \auto\bin\tools, and is named LogTIPj.exe.

When you run this program, you get a screen that gives you a choice of logging by Stock Number, Customer ID, or Trade In ID. The stock number is obvious. The customer ID is the funny number found to the right of the Last Name in the Buyer screen of the Deal program. The Trade In ID is found in the Center Right of the Tradein Screen.

Select which way you want to retrieve the data, enter the proper ID into the box, and tab out. The bottom screen will then display all the logs it can find for either that customer, or that vehicle. The display will be quite cryptic, but generally it will tell you when something was changed, at which computer (sadly, not by whom), what program did the changing, and what the old and new values are.

U-III. Find Cars

How do I find the customer for a car?



It is easy to find the buyer for a car, if you know the car's stock number. Simply pull up the deal and see who the buyer is. However, if you are looking for the spouse or cobuyer for a car, this will not easily work. We have provided a simple utility, "FindCars4Cust" that will let you enter the first couple of letter of the last names of any of these people, and it will tell you what cars they have a connection to. You can also enter any part of a phone number and that will pull up the name of the person the phone number is connected to.

U-IV. Encode/Decode

Not really used any more. This was a set of utilities that allowed me to send executable programs over email. Most email clients will block an executable thinking it is a virus. These utilities translate the binary of the executable to a funny looking ASCII, and then translates it back on the receiving end. I am now using a web site named YouSaveIt.

U-V. Auction

Documentation to be provided.
(Maybe someday)

U_VI – Printer Configuration

The program was designed originally on the presumption that there would be one printer per site, and only one site per database. Over time, it turns out that sometimes neither of these thoughts were correct. This program allows you to make changes to certain default parameters in a remote site or even just a remote office.

Printer configuration parameters are stored in the Defaults area, and can be changed in the Defaults tab of the Admin program. But that assumes either only one printer per site, or that all the printers on the site are identical and are adjusted the same.

If for some reason we have two non-identical printers at one site, then each workstation that has a printer will need to somehow know its printer's parameters. The defaults database that exists will not do this.

Every workstation has a thing called a Registry, where Windows (and any Windows programs) can store data. I have written a program named PrinterConfigPj that will do this for the printer parameters.

The screenshot shows the 'Printer Configuration' window with four main sections:

- Local Printer Setup:** Fields for Top Margin (0), Left Margin (0.3), Landscape L/P (3), Portrait L/P (3), Impact Top Line (0), Impact P/L type (1), Impact P/L (Dulcote ML 300 Turbo/D), and Plain Paper P/L (HP LaserJet 4MP at /PS). Buttons for 'Delete' and 'Save' are at the bottom.
- Temp File Location:** A 'Drive Identifier' field with 'C:' selected. Buttons for 'Delete' and 'Save' are below.
- Local Dealer Info:** Fields for Phone (509 928 8848), Fax (509 999 2720), Postal (6666), and UIC (308 998 303). Buttons for 'Delete' and 'Save' are at the bottom.
- Taxes and Stuff:** A list of tax and fee items with values: 1. Car Sales Tax (8.6), 5. MW Sales Tax (0.3), 7. Reg. Sales Tax (8.6), 8. Div. Veh. Sla. Tax (6), 2. BLD Tax Retail (0.471), 3. BLD Tax W/Wh (0.484), 5. BLD Tax Service (1.5), 4. BLD Tax on Comm (1), 15. Doc Fee (150), 16. Filing Fee (6.5), 18. License Fee (31), 8. Tax Flgty (1). Buttons for 'Delete' and 'Save' are at the bottom.

At the bottom left, a note reads: 'White bg = default, Red bg = register entry'.

When this program comes up, it reads the default parameters off the database and puts them in the various fields. It then sees if there are any parameters in the Registry area, and if there are, puts them in the fields too, but colors their backgrounds red.

You can then go and change any of the parameters. The background will turn Cyan. When you click the Save button, the data is written to the Registry.

If you would want to blow all this data away, then click on the Delete button.

This program has now been enhanced to deal with items needed if a client has a 2nd store in another location, even out of state.

U_VII – DealScanner

Doing a Deal generates a lot of paperwork. This paper can easily be misplaced, especially if you are a larger dealership with a couple of back office people shuffling that paperwork around. To solve this problem, I created a three step solution.

1) When all the paperwork has been generated for a deal, scan all that paperwork. You can use an all-in-one copier scanner if you do not have very much, or a stand alone scanner if you have a lot. Stand alone scanners can scan long forms, both sides, very quickly. Scan the images (in pdf format) into your workstation c:\temp\deals folder.



2) Bring up the Deal Scanner program. This program will ask you for a stock number (using a drop down box). It will copy that number to the box below, where you can change it if you wish. When you hit the Transfer button, the program will create a folder on the server (if it does not already exist) named \auto\dealscars\stockno where stockno is the stock number you selected. It will then copy everything in your workstation \temp\deals folder to this new folder on the server. That way everybody can have access to it.



3) when you want to find the files, the Deal program Form screen has a tiny button at the bottom of it named GetScans. Clicking this button will bring up your Acrobat pdf viewer, and populate it with all the forms for that stock number.

U_VIII – Sell All Inventory (With single pending deals)

This was developed for the rare instance where a client has a huge amount of actually sold vehicles in his inventory, but has not “sold” (eg clicked the Sell The Car button). So they remain in inventory. This will sell off almost everything laying around.

This program presumes a file named c:\temp\SellInventory.txt exists.

If the first (and only) line is WA, then

- sell vehicles with no pending deals back to the seller
- sell vehicles with one pending deal to that buyer
- skip vehicles with more than one pending deal

If the first line is anything else, then

- read subsequent lines.
- each line contains two customer Ids, separated by a comma
- the first number is where bought, the second number is who to sell to
- any cars in inventory bought from the first guy, sell to the 2nd guy