

Vetech View

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Time For A Tune-Up

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Database Maintenance

By Matt Sanregret

The number one rule of maintaining your Advantage software is to make regular backups of your database. With a good backup plan, you can recover from just about any situation with minimal or no data loss. Backups are a frequent focus of these newsletters as well as customer service calls. Hopefully all users are heeding our advice.

In addition to backing up your data, there is another tool in the Advantage system to keep your data base tuned up. This tool is called Compact Database.

Compact Database is an option off the File/Utilities menu. This utility should be run on a regular basis - perhaps once every 1-2 months. As the name implies, this utility will compact your database to make it more efficient. Your database will take up less space on your hard disk, and usually operate faster after the compact process. Compact Database will also find minor problems with the structure of your database and repair them.

Rules for Compacting Your Database

Before using the compact database utility please make sure of the following:

1. You have a current backup of your data. Backups are always recommended prior to any activity that will be changing your data - like software upgrades or data file maintenance. As well as on a daily basis.
2. For network users, make sure that you have exited the Advantage software from all stations except the one you are running the compact database from.

If you have never run Compact Database, please do so in the near future. Even for large databases, the process should only take a minute or two.

Targeting Clients for Mailings

This time of year we get lots of requests for help on doing client mailings. Whether it's for holiday cards, thank you letters, end of year promotions, etc. The process of selecting clients and printing labels in Advantage is very easy. Here are the steps.

Setup a mailing label format: The most common mailing labels are designed for a laser printer and have 30 labels per page. Even printing 5000 labels should take only fifteen to twenty minutes on a modern printer. I will use the label format below for this example.

From the File/Printer Setup menu choose your printer for the mailing label section. Again, a high-speed laser printer works very well for this. Click the setup button to create a label format. The following menu will be displayed (see figure 1).

Thought for the day: Be careful ... a pat on the back is only a few centimeters from a kick in the butt.

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Holiday Schedule

Thanksgiving

11/27/03 - half day
11/28/03 - closed

Christmas

12/24/03 - half day
12/25/03 - closed
12/26/03 - closed

New Years

12/31/03 - half day
01/01/04 - closed

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1. **Click the plus key in the upper right and assign a name to the new format.** Fill in the margin and label settings fields. The settings listed on this example have worked fine on many brands of printers, but you may need to fine tune your settings. Click OK when done.
2. **Select the clients for your mailing:** This can be done from the standard client or patient selection windows. Lets assume you want to get a list of all clients who have visited the practice in the past year. With any luck, this entire process should take less than 5 minutes!

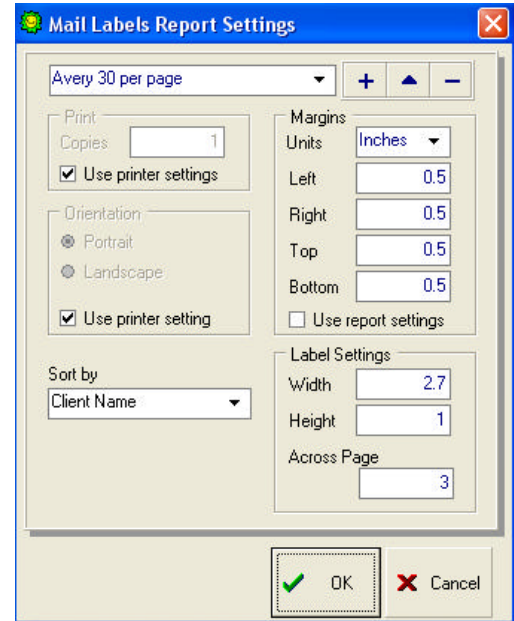
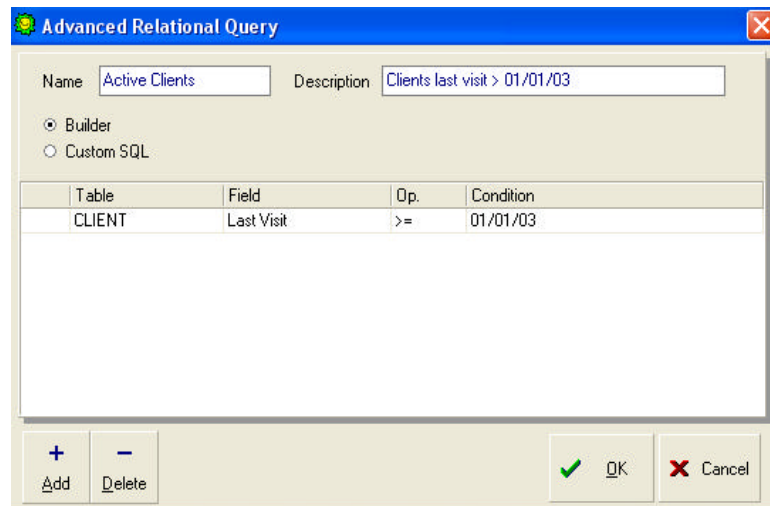


Figure 1

- a) Click the Client icon, then click the lookup tab at the lower left of the lookup window
- b) Click on the User Queries tab on the left side of this window.

From the User Queries window, click the plus to create a new search. Enter a name and description for your search. For all clients seen this year, you would enter the following into the search fields.



Trade Shows

Please visit us at the upcoming trade shows!

17th Annual Veterinary Dental Forum - San Diego CA - November 6-9

America Association of Equine Practitioners - New Orleans, LA - Nov. 22-27

North American Veterinary Conference - Orlando FL - January 18-21, 2004

Western Veterinary Conference - Las Vegas, NV - February 16-19, 2004