

HandyWork Newsletter



Winter 2016

The “New” Credit Cards

ChargeItPro? X-Charge?

Credit cards are a fact of life, and using them with HandyWorks has never been easier. There are two option, ChargeItPro (CIP) or X-Charge. In a nutshell, while we continue to support and develop the X-Charge system, we now think that ChargeItPro offers many advantages.

To begin with, ChargeItPro is less expensive with regards to monthly fees. In fact, this was our primary motivation to make a switch. Also, the tech support from CIP is faster and friendlier. Finally, the CIP system has many features that make using it easier overall. And the new PAX300 swipe machine with signature capture integrates and accepts the new EMV chip cards for enhanced security. This is a win-win solution for all.

As for the improved features, voiding a charge can be done within HandyWorks. Saving a card “on file” for future use is built in. (Just check Save Card in the patient’s “1” screen.) The CIP website interface gives you timely information on charges for the current or any prior batch. And if you make a mistake, fixing it is simple. We use it in our office and our staff LOVES it.

If you are tired of paying high rates for credit card services, why don’t you reach out to Bill Crook at 800-989-2135.

Under the Hood Data Archiving

Within any mature software program, there may not be a lot of large changes visible to the average user over any given time frame. But, “under the hood”, there are always tweaks and refinements that are driven by user questions, comments and suggestions.

Our goal is to always make HandyWorks easier and safer to use. Invalid entries are caught before they can be saved, database structural integrity is tested every time you start HandyWorks, and reports grow more sophisticated. One new feature coming soon, is a favorites list for your procedure and diagnosis codes. Overall, we seek to create an easier and more efficient system.

Returning Users

This past year brought many inactive users back to HandyWorks. Some were users who hadn’t updated in years and needed to become ICD10 compliant while others return after trying other programs. One comment we repeatedly heard was that HandyWorks was easy to use and did all the basic work in a non-complicated manner.

We are grateful to all of our users, some of whom have been with us for over 20 years. In this time of fast-paced technology, HandyWorks remains steadfast to its basic design of making the complex simple.

As the years roll by, data from a busy practice accumulates a large number of records, making your HW data file more and more bloated. Believe it or not, some users have over 25 years of records and data files approaching 500 meg!

Storing this much info is not necessary, and even worse, drags down the performance of the system. And who needs a slow system? No one! So while you might feel reluctant to get rid of old data, there is actually a very safe way to preserve older records. It’s called data archiving.

At the end of each year, we make a copy of the HWDATA file and save it under a new name with the year appended to the name, e.g. HWDATA15. This file has the entire data set as it existed at the end of 2015. Next, we open up HandyWorks and go to the Patient Data screen. There’s a button on the bottom of the screen labeled Inactives. In the screen that pops up, we put in dates of 1/1/1980 (start) and 12/31/2008 (end). We click the Trash Can to actually do the deletion. This removes patients who have not been in after 2008. To finish up the task, we need one more step, which is to compact-repair the hwdta.

Should there ever be a reason that you need to find something that was deleted, simply reattach to your hwdta2015, and all the older records will be in place.

End of HW2003

The Windows OS is always being upgraded by Microsoft. Major (successful) upgrades were from Windows 3.1 to XP, Windows 7, and now Windows 10. As each new product is released, support for the earlier version goes on to a pre-planned spiral of extinction. Along with upgrading the OS, Microsoft also upgrades its suite of programs known as Office. One component of this suite is MS Access, which is the engine that runs the HandyWorks software.

The problem for us is that newer versions of Windows no longer allow older versions of Office to run. For example, Windows 7 would not run Access 97. This is why we were forced to drop development of HW97. Similarly, Windows 10, which is being "given away" as a free upgrade won't run HW2000 or HW2003. Nor will it allow us to run an XP emulation window that Windows 7 supported.

We keeping a live Windows 7 machine so we can continue to develop the HW2000/2003 version. We'll keep you informed of any changes that may affect you.

Why Upgrade?

As mentioned in Under the Hood, we are constantly evolving the HandyWorks program. While many changes are subtle, they do accumulate! For your own well-being, you don't want to fall too far behind the current version.

If you are not having any problems, then there's no pressing need to run our routine monthly upgrades. But if you are having a problem, an upgrade may fix it. Issues with features are handled by upgrades. Issues with bugs, maybe not. That's what Tech support is for.

Doing an upgrade is easy. We provide an express link to our upgrade webpage that is accessed from the menubar on your main switchboard. Just click add-ins, and follow the link to the Upgrade.

TeamViewer

As many of you know, when calling for tech support, we almost always ask you to run TeamViewer. This program has become a critical support component for us because it lets us connect directly to your computer so we can see what is going on without having you try to explain it to us. Problems are solved faster, teaching is easier, and troubleshooting becomes a breeze.

For Your Tech

Our most frustrating tech support issues arise when users hire outside tech support folks to setup new or revamp existing network systems. Most techies are good at their job, but very few of them understand the dynamics of relational shared databases.

There are some simple guidelines that your tech needs to follow when modifying your system. The most important thing to understand is that each computer workstation has to run its own copy of HandyWorks. This means that each computer workstation must have its own copy of Microsoft Access. The data gets shared, not the program. If you try to share the program across your network, bad things will definitely happen.

There are also version issues to consider. In 2007, Microsoft changed the type of database from an MDB (Microsoft Database) to an ACCDB (Access Data Base). So if you were running HW2000 or HW2003, and your computer got upgraded to Office 2007 or 2010, you probably started running HW2007 or HW2010. But there's a problem here.

While the new versions (ACCDB) of Access could connect to older data sets (MDB), the connection is less than ideal. What needs to be done is the older MDB must be upgraded to the newer ACCDB. That's not a job for the routine tech. Please call us to do the conversion for you.

MD-OnLine

We have used a number of clearinghouses to send electronic claims. Recently, we signed up with MD-Online and are very pleased with their level of support. The website is easy to understand, claims are easy to fix, and you get feedback on your claims immediately. This is perhaps the one feature we like best about MD-Online. Please check out MDON-Line.com

Backup Issues

Sometimes, users move their data from one location to another. Sometimes its to the desktop, other times to a shared documents folder. Regardless of the cause of the data location change, the user needs to update their backup routine to specify the new location.

Many of our users like Carbonite, which is an internet based backup system. From our experience, Carbonite does a great job and should be considered if you find that backing up is hard to do.

How to Backup

Please have multiple backups of your data. Make 5 empty folders on your flash drive. Call them Mon, Tue, Wed, Thur, Fri. (Or the full names of the days of the week if you want.) On Monday, backup to the Mon folder.

To make things easy, we supply sample batch programs to do the backup for you in every HW Upgrade. If you need help in doing this correctly, call or email us. We will be glad to help you set this up.

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