

HandyWork Newsletter



Winter 1999-2000

Y2K-Here We Come!

What's New in HW-Windows

Statements have had the most changes in this release. First, we've added two columns to the statements; patient and insurance owes. Secondly, whenever you print a statement, an entry is added to the ledger card indicating that a statement was created. Finally, we enhanced the aged balance box at the bottom of the report.

The HCFA form now has an option that allows the carrier address, found on the top of the form, to be on the left or right side.

The Billing History in Alt-3 has a new button - reprint unpaid portion.

Insurance carriers now has a new button, add duplicate, which lets you add a carrier just like the one on the screen. Use this option when you need to enter the same carrier info, but with a different PO Box.

Lastly, we moved the self-help button off the forms and onto the menubar.

How to Upgrade

We post all changes to the HWW system on the HandyWorks website. You can get them from the bottom of the Download page in the registered users section. Click on the appropriate link to get the latest HWW from the password protected, self-extracting file.

If we have your email address, (please give us one) we will let you know when significant changes are posted.

What's New in HW-DOS

HCFA forms printed with a bill date in the year 2000+ will print 4 digit dates for all claims. Currently, this is only done for Medicare and BCBS.

We also just fixed a Y2K problem in the appointment schedule that disabled the search for next appointment function. This same problem was also fixed on the receipt printing so it correctly shows the next appointment on the receipt, even if its in 2000.

Those of you with an email address on file with us have already gotten the upgrade from the website. To the rest, your disk should be enclosed with this newsletter.

DOS to HWW Upgrade Offer

Over 75% of our users now are on HWW. We strongly encourage, (even urge) our remaining DOS users to upgrade to the Windows platform because it is so much better in so many ways!

While we will continue to support our DOS users for the foreseeable future, we hope you will take advantage of our half-price upgrade offer. All of your DOS data can be transferred over while leaving the DOS system intact and still perfectly usable. This low price offer is only available to DOS users who are current in their maintenance.

Why you should upgrade to HWW

We recommend upgrading for many reasons. First, the Windows version is a much better program than DOS. DOS was put together over a 12 year period of time. Many of its major pieces, such as the Help System, Ledger Card, Vital Stats and Electronic Billing (to name a few) were added after the initial design period and work somewhat awkwardly. (That is why you need to F5 in End of Day.)

The Windows version, on the other hand, was completely designed before we started writing code. This means that the Windows version is a seamless program encompassing all of the DOS features, just done a lot better.

On the support side, maintaining the Windows version is easier too. This is especially true for bill printing issues with routine HCFA, Medicare and BCBS changes easily implemented. Often times, we can help you make the change to the form printing routine, over the phone, in a matter of moments.

Remember that you lose none of the DOS features, yet gain a myriad of other benefits. For example, Windows supports HMO fixed dollar co-pays. Another great feature is the ability to make payments go to specific office visits. This helps track those "pesky" insurance errors in which they pay only part your bill. (We wonder if they skip visit dates on purpose, or if they are simply incompetent).

For those of you who choose to remain with the DOS version, this is OK! We will continue to support the DOS system, and the DOS version is fully functional under any Windows environment. We understand that some offices are resistant to change from a system they are comfortable with to one that is "unknown".

Email info

Back in the stone ages, we relied exclusively on the post office to deliver fixes and patches to our users. This involved making up loads of disks, mailing labels, mailing envelopes and stamps. Sometimes, we'd get back mangled packages forcing us to do multiple resends, etc. All in all, an arduous process.

Thankfully, over 2/3rds of our users now have internet accounts so we can do this by email. We thank you graciously, and hope more of you follow suit. If you have an email address, please write to me at Steve@HandyWorks.com.

Y2K - What's it all about, Alfie

When the HW-DOS version was first written, it was designed to run on a CP/M (the forerunner of DOS) machine with only 10 megs of hard drive (a Kaypro-10). This was considered spacious at the time (1981). In order to conserve disk storage space, years were represented by just 2 digits. We all knew the century, it was 1900. We never planned for the HW-DOS program to last 20 years, but here we are, at the new millennium, and DOS is still around!

While the DOS program will never be "Y2K compliant", we have added code to help it figure out the correct century. Right now, any year under 5 is in year 2000, any year

over 5 is in 1900. As the years go by, we will update this filter to keep the DOS version kludging along. Of course the best solution is for all of our DOS users to migrate to the windows version!

There is a vast difference between the issue of "Y2K Compliance" and "Will it work?" For example, Microsoft Access 2.0 is not Y2K compliant. This is because one or two internal date functions work oddly with 2000+ dates. However, because HandyWorks doesn't use these non-compliant date functions, HandyWorks will work fine past 2000. The bottom line is not to confuse compliance, which is a technical term, with "Will it work?" which is a practical matter.

Your Preparations for Y2K

For those using Windows 95 and 98, go to your control panel, regional settings, date tab. Make the short date format MM/dd/yyyy. Up on the top of the date page, tell windows how you want 2 digit years defined. Click OK. You are done.

Lastly, make a complete backup prior to the end of the year. Put it away and hope it will not be needed.

Do Not Upgrade Your Computer!

DO NOT INSTALL ACCESS 2000 on your computer. It will overwrite critical program files and make HandyWorks for Windows inoperative! In the coming year, we will be upgrading all our users to Access 2000. Please wait!

DOS users, do not upgrade your printer. Newer printers do not easily accept the ASCII bit stream that HW-DOS spits out to the printer. Keep your old equipment!

Backup Horror!

Dr. J.H. in Atlanta decided to install Access 2000 on his machine. When that messed things up, he uninstalled HandyWorks. Then he re-installed it, but Lo! his data was nowhere to be found, not even on a backup. So, S.O.L, he's starting over, wiser and hopefully more careful about backing up.

We have also encountered an office that knew how to back up, but couldn't restore. Dr. R.K's office in Long Island needed to restore from a backup. They were backing up on 250K Zip disks using MS-Backup, but for some reason, the restore wasn't working. I have asked them to send us the zip disk. Hopefully, with our advanced recovery program, we can save their tuchus for another day.

Please, practice restoring your data - especially to another location. Make sure **YOU** don't end up in this column next year. Learn how to back up and restore. Please!

Proper Backup

Backup several times a week, on different disks for different days. This way, if you have bad data that you only just discovered, you can go back to a previous version. Do a compare verify to make sure what you wrote is what got wrote. And most important, make sure you are backing up the Handyworks data files. These are *.dat for DOS users and hwdata.mdb for HWW users.

HandyWorks
140 East 28th Street (1F)
New York, NY 10016
(800) 255-0668
(212) 889-8878
Fax (212) 889-8830