

Symantec ACT! 3.0 for Windows 95

Stephen R. Heller[†]

USDA, ARS, Beltsville, Maryland 20705

Received March 24, 1997

Keeping track of colleagues used to be an easy task. A Roladex file with some notes scribbled down or a business card stapled to a blank page worked well for years. Today, with changing phone numbers, changing city and area phone numbers, fax numbers, e-mail addresses, WWW address, and so on, the simple Roladex is no longer adequate for most needs.

For a number of years I have been using the ACT! contact manager software, now being sold by Symantec. The current version is 3.0 and is a considerable improvement over the previous version. The new version is now easier to use, customize, and update. As with most improvements these come with one drawback—conversion from previous versions—as not all fields from ACT!, version 2 have a corresponding field in ACT! 3.0. (Please note that this is not a problem for everyone, only those who did considerable customization in ACT!, version 2.)

The program comes on a CD-ROM and installs very easily and quickly. Conversion from ACT! version 2 was not as simple as I had hoped, but technical support for this product was more than excellent and a technician walked me through the entire process. After the automatic conversion was completed, it did take some additional manual massaging of the data files to get everything working perfectly.

ACT! 3.0 allows for easy attaching of files to a particular entry. In this way letter or spreadsheet files can be easily linked together. ACT! 3.0 also has a limited e-mail capability, so that with some e-mail LAN systems you can easily go from the record of that person to sending an e-mail to that person. WWW links are also easily connected within ACT! 3.0. Searching for a name or any part of a record, such as a keyword tag, is simple and quick. Printing records in a number of formats is also a simple process.

What makes this package really nice, like all other new Symantec products, is the new free LiveUpdate feature. With LiveUpdate, all you do is click on the icon, and the software automatically goes to the Symantec ftp site, looks to see if there is an update, and automatically performs the update installation. Clicking on one button is something I can live with.

In summary, not only is this an excellent personal contact manager program but also its LiveUpdate capability makes it as easy as possible to keep your software up to date.

ACT! 3.0 has a retail price of \$199.95 (\$89.95 for an upgrade from version 2.0) and is available from Symantec Corporation, 10201 Torre Avenue, Cupertino, CA 95014. Phone: 800-441-7234; WWW: <http://www.symantec.com>.

[†] srheller@gig.usda.gov.