

Symantec ACT! 4.0 for Windows[†]

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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, World Wide Web (www) url addresses, 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, starting with version 2. The current version is 4.0 and is an improvement over the version 3. While the changes in going from version 3.0 to 4.0 are not as great as those from version 2.0 to 3.0, the new version does have a number of useful features.

The program comes on a CD-ROM and installs very easily and quickly. ACT! requires Windows 95 or NT and at least 30 MB of disk space, not including your database of names and addresses. My database of 2000 entries is about 8 MB in size. Conversion from ACT! version 3.0 to 4.0 was trivial, but incomplete. The good news is that one of the many new features in ACT! 4.0 (see below) is the ability to go from an e-mail address in a record in the database to directly writing and sending an e-mail message. The bad news is that my e-mail field from ACT! 3.0 was not in the format of the e-mail field in ACT! 4.0. After three phone calls (all long distance phone calls) and 2 h of exporting and importing copies of the database the problem was solved.

What makes this package really nice, like all other new Symantec products, is the new LiveUpdate feature, which I used just after the initial installation. 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. Even

though the software has been on the market for about 2 months, there already was a minor update (4.01) available which involved the interface between ACT! 4.0 and WordPerfect 8.

ACT! 4.0 comes with a number of improved features, many of which, have to do with the Internet. More e-mail options are available (Internet e-mail)POP3/SMTP), Eudora Pro (3.03 and higher), cc:mail), and an automatic link to the internet white pages (Yahoo!, Bigfoot, and WhoWhere directories) to look up the e-mail/phone of someone you want to contact. There is also a link to the Yahoo! Maps database to get a map of the address of the person in the record for whom you are looking. This is really neat, as the program takes the address in the database record and automatically sends it to Yahoo! which then flashes the map on your computer screen for you to print out.

A new module to the program, SideACT! allows one to jot down bits and pieces of information for later incorporation into the database when you have the time to spend to make additions and updates. Backing up the database in ACT! 4.0 is easier with a zip utility, since the entire database is much too large for a floppy disk.

In summary, this is both an excellent personal contact manager program and an easy to use and easy to customize program, and its LiveUpdate capability makes it as easy as possible to keep your software up to date.

ACT! 4.0 has a retail price of \$199.95 (\$89.95 for an upgrade from versions 1.0–3.0) and is available from Symantec Corporation, 10201 Torre Avenue, Cupertino, CA 95014. Phone: 800-441-7234; WWW: <http://www.symantec.com>.

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