

INSTANT 
 **RECALL**

INSTANT RECALL

for the Amstrad CPC-464/664/6128

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INTRODUCTION

INSTANT RECALL is a simple electronic filing system (or *database*) which allows you to file over twenty-eight thousand characters of information.

One of the most common applications of database programs is to store names and addresses - a mailing list - and to help you get going a small database of names and addresses has been included on the tape or disk.

BEFORE YOU START

There are a few terms that are commonly used in connection with databases that you ought to understand before proceeding further. Imagine a card index system where each card bears the name and address of a customer - in computer jargon, the entire index is called a *database*.

Each of the cards in the system is a *record*. The different items of information on the card (name, address, phone number etc.) are called *fields*. Usually each line of an address is a separate field and sometimes a name will be split up into two fields - christian name (or initials) and surname.

On an index card you can usually fit in as much information as you want - but that's because the cards are often much larger than they need to be to contain the data. Computer memory is more expensive than cardboard, and so the space allocated for each record needs to be kept to the absolute minimum.

LOADING INSTANT RECALL

To load INSTANT RECALL type:

RUN "IR" <ENTER>

When INSTANT RECALL has loaded, a copyright message will be displayed. Press any key to continue.

INSTANT RECALL is *menu-driven* - this means that whenever you can make a choice from a number of different options, the computer will display a list of the available options. If you enter an option by mistake, you can always press ESC to return to the menu. ESC will also exit to the main menu from a sub-menu.

When you first use INSTANT RECALL, you might like to load the sample database which is provided. In this case choose the LOAD/SAVE/CATALOG option by pressing E, then press A to select LOAD. Type the file name *example* and press ENTER.

When the sample database has loaded you should experiment with the options in the program. Try adding some records of your own, or amending some of the existing records. The more familiar you are with the facilities of the program, the easier you will find it to set up your own database.

SETTING UP A DATABASE

If you are using the program for the first time you cannot proceed very far without setting up a database. This is very easy - but you do need to think things through before you start. How many fields do you need, and what are they? What is the maximum length of each field? INSTANT RECALL allows you up to 15 fields per record, and each field can be up to 71 characters long. The field names can be up to 8 characters long.

Let's suppose that you want to set up a database which contains the names and addresses of your friends and acquaintances. The information you want to record on file might look like this:

Field Name	Information	Max size
Title	Miss	4
Surname	Archer	24
1st Name	Elizabeth	15
Street	Brookfield	24
Town	AMBRIDGE	16
Postcode	BO14 2SZ	8
Phone	012 46 8026	12
Notes	B/day 2 Oct	12

The records in this database will each have 8 fields, and the total number of characters per record is 115. Each database can contain over 28,000 characters, so with a record size of 115 characters you can have about 250 records.

The information *you* wish to store might be totally different - there's no reason why a database has to contain names and addresses. However the principle is the same, whatever the data - decide what information you need to record, then work out the maximum length of each field.

To set up a database, select option B from the main menu. Then enter the number of fields in each record (at least 1, but not more than 15). Note that unless you are making a selection from a menu you must always press ENTER after each entry (if your computer has a key marked RETURN, use it instead of ENTER). If you make a mistake you can use the delete key to go back and correct your entry - provided that you have not pressed ENTER.

Whenever INSTANT RECALL prompts you for an entry, a box appears; as you type your entry the characters appear in the box. The length of the box indicates the maximum number of characters that you can enter.

Now that the number of fields has been fixed the program will ask you to enter the name of each field (up to 8 characters). It helps if you enter the fields in a logical order, as in our example above, although in fact it is possible to print out fields in any order. You can leave a field name blank if you wish - just press ENTER.

Finally you will be asked to enter the size of each field - this can be anything from 1 to 71 characters. The size you enter is the maximum number of characters that you can enter for that field, and although you can enlarge the field at a later stage it is best to make sure that it is sufficiently large when you set the file up.

Normally, records are displayed on a 40 column screen, however if the length of a field exceeds 31 characters, 80 column display mode will automatically be selected.

ENTERING AND EDITING RECORDS

Once you have set up your database, the next step is to enter some information. Option B in the main menu allows you to VIEW, AMEND, ADD, DELETE, INSERT, or REPLICATE records. All of these functions (except for ADD) relate to the *current record*, which is the record that you have most recently entered, amended, or viewed. To change the current record select option G from the sub menu to GOTO a different record.

Add New Records

Option B in the sub menu allows you to input a new record. Enter the information for each field when prompted, then press ENTER to go onto the next field. When you have finished entering in a record you will be asked if it is correct. Press Y if it is all right, or N to make changes to what you have just typed.

Amend Current Record

Press C if you want to amend the current record. The record will be displayed and you can change each field in turn. To leave a field unchanged, simply press ENTER. Alternatively you can use the cursor keys to move to the field you want to change. You can use shift-DELETE to insert spaces, and CLR to delete the rest of a field from the cursor position onwards.

Delete Current Record

When you select option D the current record will be displayed - if you are sure that you want to delete it press Y, otherwise press N. When you delete a record all of the following records move up one place to fill the gap.

Insert a Record at Current Position

Because INSTANT RECALL can locate any particular record extremely quickly there is no real need to keep your records in any particular order. However, if you do want to keep them in order, just like a card index, you will sometimes need to insert a record in between two existing records. To insert a record before the current record press E, then proceed as if you were adding a record.

View Current Record

This function allows you to browse through the database. Initially the current record is displayed - press **N** to go on to the next record, **P** to go back to the previous record. In addition you can press **E** to edit (amend) the record, or **T** to tag (or un-tag) it. A full explanation of tagging is given in the next section. To clear all the tags in a database use option **H**.

Replicate Current Record

To replicate (copy) the current record select option **F**. The copy is inserted at the current record position and you are then able to edit it using the **AMEND** option.

Print Current Record

To print a copy of the current record on the printer select option **I**. The printer should have been set up using option **F** from the main menu beforehand.

SEARCHING THE DATABASE & PRINTING REPORTS

INSTANT RECALL can locate and display particular records very, very, quickly. Select option **C** from the main menu.

One feature that makes **INSTANT RECALL**'s searching facilities particularly powerful is the use of *tags*. To help understand how tags are used, imagine that you are using an old-fashioned card index system. Now you might well go through the cards and take some of them out for closer examination. **INSTANT RECALL** uses tags in much the same way, to identify a group of records within the main database. You don't need to use tags at all - but once you become more familiar with **INSTANT RECALL**, you'll probably find all sorts of uses for them!

If a record has been tagged, the record number is followed by an asterisk (*) whenever the record is displayed.

Before a search can begin, **INSTANT RECALL** needs to know what you are looking for - and what to do when it finds it! All you need to do is answer a few simple questions:

PRINT ANY FOUND RECORDS (Y/N)? - if you press Y, the record(s) found in the search will be printed automatically.

DO YOU WANT THE RECORDS TAGGED (Y/N)? - Answering Y to this question will cause each record found to be tagged. You will be asked whether or not you wish to clear the existing tags before the search.

JUST SEARCH FOR TAGGED RECORDS (Y/N)? - If you answer Y to this question, INSTANT RECALL will search only those records which are already tagged. So that you can have time to view the records as they are found, you can opt to have a pause after each record satisfying the search criteria is displayed.

SHOULD CAPITAL LETTERS BE REGARDED AS EQUIVALENT TO LOWER CASE (Y/N)? - Your answer to this question determines whether, for example, *Supersoft* is considered to be the same as *supersoft* and *SUPERSOFT*. If you answer N then these are all considered different.

Finally, a blank record will be displayed which you can fill in with your search criteria. Any field that you leave blank is disregarded. Normally you will not be looking for an exact match, but will wish to find alternative spellings etc. INSTANT RECALL can search intelligently if you use the <, >, =, *, and ? symbols to search for ranges: For example,

- NAME: **supersoft** - finds every record with a name field *supersoft*
- NAME: **a*** - finds every record with a name starting with *a*
- NAME: **Sm?th*** - would match any character in the 3rd position and anything from the 6th position onwards - *Smith, Smyth, Smythe, Smythe-Jones* etc. would all be matched
- NAME: ***son** - would find *Robinson, Johnson* etc.
- NAME: ***ob*** - would find *Robinson, Roberts, object, blob* and so on.
- NAME: **<Smith** - finds every record with a name that comes before *Smith* alphabetically

- NAME: <=Smith** - finds every record with a name that comes up to and including *Smith*
- NAME: >Jones** - finds every record with a name that comes after *Jones*
- NAME: <>Jones** - finds every record with a name other than *Jones*

The ? symbol will match any one character, whilst the * symbol can match any number of characters.

Digits (0-9) are considered to be less than (<) letters. If capital letters are not considered equivalent to small letters (see above) then they are considered less than small letters but greater than digits:

Digits < Capitals < Small Letters

When the search criteria have been entered the search will take place. If automatic printing or automatic tagging has not been selected, you will be given the options of printing or tagging records which satisfy the criteria.

MORE ABOUT TAGS

Tags can be used to group together records which satisfy totally different criteria. For example, it would be impossible to produce a report containing records with names SMITH and JONES using only the <, >, =, * and ? operators. However, we could print such a report using the following three searches:

1. Do not print records
Tag all found records
Clear tags before search
Search ALL records for surname SMITH
2. Do not print records
Tag all found records
Do not clear tags before search
Search ALL records for surname JONES

3. Print all found records
Do not tag found records
Search TAGGED records for any match

SORTING THE DATABASE

Very often it is useful to be able to sort information in alphabetical or numerical order. INSTANT RECALL's SORT facility allows you to do this - select **D** from the main menu.

You will be shown a list of the fields in a record and asked to select the one with the highest priority, ie. the one most important to the sort. In our mailing list example this would probably be the surname. Next you must select the order of the sort. An ascending sort will put records into numerical and alphabetical order (ie. 0-9, A-Z). A descending sort will put records into the reverse order.

INSTANT RECALL will sort on up to three fields (any three fields), so that if two or more records have the same first field, they are sorted according to the second field. If they have the same first and second field, they are sorted on the third field.

In our mailing list example, the second priority field might be the first name. This would mean that all JONES's, for example, would be sorted according to their first name or initials. Press ENTER if you do not wish to sort on second or third priority fields.

Although it is useful to be able to sort the database into order, each time you sort it, the record numbers will change. If you wish to keep the same record numbers, you should save the database to tape or disk before sorting.

SAVING OR LOADING THE DATABASE

Because the entire database is held within the computer's memory, you will never be slowed down by the speed of the disk or tape when you are entering or updating records. However, you must save the database to disk or tape before switching off the computer, otherwise any additions or amendments will not be recorded.

Select **E** from the main menu to save or load a database, then **A** to **SAVE** or **B** to **LOAD**. When you load a database any information already in the computer's memory will be lost - so if you select the load option before saving the data in memory you will be warned, and asked to confirm that this is what you wish to do. Press **N** if you have made a mistake, or **Y** to proceed with loading.

You can catalog a disk (or tape) by selecting option **C** from the sub-menu.

It is important to remember the names of database files, as to reload a database you must enter the correct name. If you use disk it is easy to display the directory, but if you are a tape user you would do well to write the name of the file onto the cassette label. You might use the date as part of the filename, so that you can be sure which file is the latest version of the database.

SETTING UP PRINTER INFORMATION

Option **F** in the main menu allows you to define how records are printed, because although records are always displayed in the same format on the screen, **INSTANT RECALL** allows you to print them in any way you like.

If your database contains names and addresses then you will probably want to print address labels. However, records can be printed out in any format you like - for a report you might want to print the whole record on one line.

When you select option **F** you will be asked a series of questions. The current (default) setting is displayed in each case. You can press **ENTER** to accept the default value or alter it to your own requirements.

NUMBER OF PRINTER CHARACTERS PER LINE - this determines the number of characters that can be printed on one line. Most printers have an 80 character line, but you can set this to cater for shorter or longer lines.

IS A LINE FEED REQUIRED (Y/N)? - some printers automatically feed the paper up at the end of a line, others wait for the computer to send a *line feed* character. If you answer this question incorrectly either all the printing will take place on one line or there will be an extra blank line between each line of output.

NUMBER OF LINES PER LABEL - the label size can vary from 1 line to 72 lines and is principally used when you are printing onto computer labels. Standard labels are 15/16 inch or 1 7/16 inch deep (6 and 9 lines respectively, including a line between labels).

HOW MANY LABELS ACROSS PAGE (1-4)? - computer labels come with up to four labels in a row across the page.

START POSITION - this determines where the first character of each label is printed. A value of 1 means that each line begins as far to the left as the printer will allow.

PRINT FIELD NAMES ON LABEL (Y/N)? - the answer to this question determines whether or not field names are printed alongside the field contents on the output. Whenever a record is displayed on the screen, the name is displayed alongside each field. However, when you are printing out information you may not wish to print the field names.

LEAVE BLANK LINES IN OUTPUT (Y/N)? - the answer to this question determines whether or not blank fields will leave a blank line (if they are on a line of their own) when a label is printed. If you answer N, any blank lines will be ignored (though the correct spacing between labels will be maintained).

DO YOU WISH TO OUTPUT ANY BYTES TO THE PRINTER (Y/N)? - if you answer Y to this question you can enter a list of numbers (separated by commas) which will immediately be sent to the printer. This facility is most likely to be used to change character sets.

DO YOU WISH TO CHANGE THE £ SIGN DEFINITION (Y/N)? - many printers do not normally print English pound signs (£). Answering Y allows you to enter up to 8 bytes which will be sent to the printer each time a pound sign is encountered. This is sufficient, for example, to change character sets on some printers. Set unused bytes to zero.

LABEL OUTPUT FORMAT

If you want to print out each record in its entirety, with one field per line, and with the fields in the same order as normal, just press ENTER in response to each question. However, you can totally re-organise the data if you wish, leaving out some fields, repeating others, including two or more fields on a single line, or inserting blank lines in the middle. For example, the plain format described above would print out 8 fields on separate lines, for example:

Mr
Grundy
Joseph
Grange Farm
AMBRIDGE
BO14 8HJ
01 123 4567
B/day 8 Mar

The format below would give a quite different result:

Item 1 is Title	;	: 1
Item 2 is 1st Name	;	: 3
Item 3 is Name	:	: 2
Item 4 is Street	:	: 4
Item 5 is Town	,	: 5
Item 6 is Postcode	:	: 6
Item 7 is (END)	:	: 0

The default value for each item is the field with the corresponding number. To accept the default press ENTER, or else type the number of the field you wish to appear in its place, then press ENTER. When you have entered all the fields you want printed, enter 0 for the next item.

You may be wondering why some field names are followed by a semi-colon (;) or comma (,). Normally, each field will be printed on a new line, however you can add a semi-colon or comma by pressing the appropriate key after the field number, in which case the next field will be printed on the same line. If you choose a comma the fields are printed in full - including any spaces at the end; if you specify a semi-colon then the fields are printed with one space only in between. To remove a comma or semi-colon, type in the field number alone.

The following example shows an address label that might be produced by the output format above:

```
Mr Brian Aldridge
Home Farm
AMBRIDGE          BO14 1BV
```

Note that the Title, First name and Surname are on the same line with just one space in between, whereas the Town and Postcode are separated by several spaces (the town field has a maximum length of 12 characters in our example).

CHANGING THE RECORD STRUCTURE

Unlike most database programs, INSTANT RECALL allows you to change the structure of records after you have set up the database and entered data. Select option G from the main menu.

Altering The Length of a Field

Select **A** from the sub-menu and then enter the number of the field you wish to change. Remember that if you shorten a field information contained in that field may be truncated.

Add an Extra Field

Select **B** from the sub-menu followed by the number of the field in front of which you wish the new field to be inserted. To insert a new field at the end of the record type a number one greater than the number of existing fields. For example, to insert a field at the end of a record with 8 fields, type 9.

If you add or remove a field, the printer information may need updating.

Remove a Field

Selecting **C** from the sub-menu allows you to remove a field from each record. Take care not to make a mistake as this option is irreversible!

Rename a Field

To rename a field select option **D**, then enter the number of the field whose name you wish to change.

DATABASE STATISTICS

Option **H** will display information about the database currently in memory, including the field names and lengths, the number of records present, and the amount of room left for new records.

HINTS AND TIPS

Here are some tips that will help you to get the most out of INSTANT RECALL. Use the blank space on the next page to make your own notes.

- * To print out the entire database on the printer, select the Search Database option, and specify a totally blank record.
- * If you are printing address labels, and want two copies of each, you can either run through twice, or set up the Output Format so that the information is printed twice (this will only work if you are printing on labels which are one across).
- * You could print your data in the form of a report with one line per entry - just put a comma after each field in the Output Format.
- * Always have a blank tape or formatted disk available to save your database. Keep security copies in case of accidents - they can and do happen!

PAGE FOR YOUR OWN NOTES

WORD PERFECT

If you've found INSTANT RECALL easy to use, you might be interested in a word processing program that's also simple to learn.

WORD PERFECT is an ideal program for newcomers to word processing, or for any one who has found other word processors too complex.

To obtain a copy of WORD PERFECT send a cheque for £17.95 (tape) or £24.95 (disk) to Supersoft, or phone 01-861 1166 and quote your ACCESS number.