

The McCormick Letter

The Nation's Leader in Estimating Software

www.mccormicksys.com

June 2001

What We're Working On:

Major Changes to Your Estimating Life Now Being Made in New Version 7.0!

When McCormick Systems rolls out Version 7.0 of our program this fall, what you see isn't necessarily going to be what you get—if you don't want it to be!

Current versions of our software will not let you make changes and tweak your estimate. For example, let's say you've estimated that a given job will have 15,576 feet of conduit. To even things up, you decide you want to plug in 16,000—adjusting the quantity in the take-off. Version 7.0 will help you do that—and a lot else besides.

You'll be able to change the quantity of items taken off and estimated. You'll be able to make changes to prices. You'll be able to change labor hours in the estimate, either one item at a time or all in one fell swoop.

For example, let's say you're done with the estimate. But you've found out that conditions on the job—weather, or a different GC, or a difficult-to-work-with mechanical contractor—have changed from your initial assumptions. The job is the same, the material is the same, but you want

Quantity	Item Name	C-Code	Bid Line	Unit	Price	Ext. Price
17166.2071	15475 2PH 24GA TEL CABLE	14	5.18 M	81.30	81.30	1401.88
4277.8296	36 12 THRU CU BOND	14	5.46	83.40	83.40	356.88
3550.1744	1/2 EMT	14	2.0	824.82	824.82	2928.32
427.4815	3/4 EMT	14	3.0	343.84	343.84	146.64
1332.240	1/2 EMT CONDUIT	14	4.0	824.82	824.82	1100.24
2381.8254	3/4 EMT	14	3.0	343.84	343.84	819.24
961.4238	1/2 EMT	14	2.0	467.31	467.31	448.80
161.544	3/4 EMT	14	3.0	151.18	151.18	45.35
1365.2224	1/2 EMT	14	2.0	682.61	682.61	915.84
960.9627	3/4 EMT	14	3.0	151.18	151.18	45.35
960.9627	1/2 EMT	14	2.0	467.31	467.31	448.80
960.9627	3/4 EMT	14	3.0	151.18	151.18	45.35
960.9627	1/2 EMT	14	2.0	467.31	467.31	448.80
1489.5738	3/4 EMT	14	3.0	151.18	151.18	45.35
30.141	1/2 EMT	14	2.0	467.31	467.31	448.80
5.3766	1132 3P TOGGLE SW. STANDARD	14	20.0	889.24	889.24	17.79
14.8136	1189 3P TOGGLE SW. STANDARD	14	20.0	1150.40	1150.40	3.80
150.8031	1264 1P PLASTIC SWITCH PLATE	14	5.0	320.34	320.34	6.41
860.1807	1264 1P PLASTIC POWER PLATE	14	5.0	833.32	833.32	32.51
200	1266 1P PLUS DUP. RECP PLATE	14	5.0	820.04	820.04	16.00
422.4764	1267 1P PLUS TELEPHONE PLATE	14	5.0	820.04	820.04	31.01
860.1807	1132 DUPLEX RECP. STANDARD	14	20.0	884.12	884.12	170.04
2479.8686	1132 4S 20 MDS 1/2" DSEP	14	5.0	1109.52	1109.52	247.86
1438.2116	1141 4S 20 MDS 1/2" DSEP	14	5.0	860.17	860.17	124.11
5.3766	1144 4S 20 MDS 1/2" DSEP	14	5.0	860.17	860.17	4.61
1066.3096	1167 4S BLANK COVER	14	5.0	843.51	843.51	43.82
1760	1264	14	5.0	860.17	860.17	150.92
2200	1264 3 PDS 36 RED SPECIAL MOUNT	14	5.0	860.17	860.17	188.19
123.6424	843 T TROFFER 2x4	14	8.0	830.50	830.50	74.44
30.141	844 T RECESSED SHALL	14	1.0	110.00	110.00	3.30
5.3766	845 T RECP	14	1.0	836.30	836.30	4.49
100	100 100 100 100 100	14	1.0	100.00	100.00	10.00
						1365.47

to *adjust* the labor hours upward, because it's very likely that the change (whatever it is) is going to have an impact on your productivity.

With Version 7.0, you can make such a range edit (adjustment). You can take all of your labor hours, and adjust them up by (let's say) 1.55%.

Flexibility is the key here. Let's say that it is a specific area of the building that will cause a difficulty.

You can adjust specific labor items—cherry-picking among those items you've estimated—to adjust upward only those you think will be affected.

“Essentially, you will be able to massage the estimate in just about any way you can think of,” says Todd McCormick, company president. “This is going to be a big, big addition for our customers. We have been wanting to deliver this for as long as I can remember—and now we're just about to do it.”

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Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Where did my labels and toolbar go?

A. From time to time these may disappear. Simply click on the 'takeoff' menu, 'toolbars' and then 'both', this will bring them back.

Q. How much RAM do I need?

A. You can never have too much RAM. With prices plummeting towards 50 cents per megabyte (\$0.50/MB), there is no better time to upgrade. **X**



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McCormick's Support Staff— An Extension of Your IT Department!

Perhaps you have an Information Technology person or department. Perhaps you don't. It's not McCormick's job to figure out how you staff your company.

However, it IS our job, we think, to help you to make a profit on your estimates. If you've become our customer, we want to help you put that software to work as quickly as possible, so you'll marvel at what you've purchased and recommend our product to others.

A vital link in all of this is the Support Department at McCormick. The beauty of it is simply this: Unlike many other suppliers of software in all computer realms, we do not limit our support to our company's software. Unless we really can't figure it out, we do not dispense advice that begins and ends with "Call Microsoft." We're quite aware that getting MS customer service is going to take you quite some time.

No, this doesn't mean we'll help you figure out how to get rid of the goshdarn "Paper Clip" character that keeps popping up with unnecessary advice in Microsoft Word. However, it does mean that we have schooled our Support personnel on Microsoft operating system issues that you're likely to run into when installing our software.

It's not unusual for our Support staff to answer questions about installing a printer, installing a new network protocol, or mapping a network drive. None of these queries are integral to our software! But if answering these questions will help you put our software to work, at its fullest intensity—thereby helping you make money faster—we'll answer them.

"We've got a team of eight full-time Support technicians," says Todd McCormick, president. "Six of them are on the phones at any given time. Obviously, at any given time everyone might be busy.

"We have two goals. Number One, if we don't pick up your call immediately, our goal is to call you back within 15 minutes. Number Two, when we take on your problem, we will work with you until the issue, whatever it is, is seen through to its conclusion."

A key to remember in all of this is that our Support department is like a braintrust. Not everyone has every answer at his or her fingertips. So there may well come a moment in your phone call with Support that you are



put on hold. Your contact is NOT going out for a cup of coffee! He or she might well be talking to our other Support people, who might have run into your problem a few weeks earlier.

Many customers have Support contracts with McCormick; some do not. If you're not on Support and need it urgently, it's available—our staff will take your credit card number on the phone, institute a contract that minute, and get to work on your problem.

Finally, it is not uncommon for customers to call our Support department for simple advice on what kind of hardware to buy. There are a lot of questions lately about buying laptop computers. If you're about to give a laptop to an estimator or project manager, or put one in a trailer, and you need advice, please call our Support department. We can give you the kind of perspective gained only by being on the receiving end! ✕

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In addition, if you've estimated 1,000 feet of $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch EMT in a job, and you decide—due to some change—that you want to convert 300 feet of the $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch EMT to one-inch EMT, Version 7.0 allows you to easily make the change.

There's more. After you estimate a job and win it (we hope!), you will want to work from the saved estimate. Perhaps there are months between the day you closed the estimate, and the day you open the job—and, in that period, prices (or even labor costs) have changed. Now, you can pull prices and labor out of your updated McCormick database.

Best of all, you can choose how you update that estimate. As the user, you define the rules. Perhaps you have hardcoded some numbers in your estimate—some special areas of the job, or a particular part of the project that's going to be a bear. With Version 7.0, you'll be able to "tell" our system to update the entire estimate—except for those items you've hard coded (assuming you don't want to monkey with those areas on which you've taken special care).

In the coming months, we'll keep you updated on our tweaks and improvements to this software. It will be done sometime this fall! ✕

Just as You Change Your Oil Regularly, Defragment Your Disks on a Regular Basis!



What Is It? Over time, as programs read from and write to a hard disk, information stored on the disk can become *fragmented*—that is, files are stored in noncontiguous clusters. Fragmentation does not affect the validity of the information—the files are still complete when they are opened. But it takes much longer for the computer to read and write fragmented files than it does unfragmented files. To improve file access time, you can defragment uncompressed drives and compressed DriveSpace or DoubleSpace drives.

Why Do It? When a program starts (loads), it reads an EXE file and various DLL files. However, only portions of the EXE and DLL files are read during start. Furthermore, these reads are not sequential and jump back and forth, both within the same file and between files. Every one of these non-sequential accesses translates to a “disk seek”—and a performance penalty.

Windows 98 Disk Defragmenter has been enhanced to make programs start much faster. It tries to place disk clusters in the order they are read, so these seeks are eliminated or greatly reduced, shortening the time needed to start the program. To record the disk access patterns of programs during their startup, Windows 98 uses a process called Task Monitor. Task Monitor automatically monitors programs you use and records their disk access patterns during their start. These records, called log files, are stored in the \Windows\Applog directory. In addition to access patterns, Task Monitor records the number of times you use programs. This usage information enables Disk Defragmenter to favor more frequently used programs when optimizing the disk.

The format of the log file name is *application.lgn*, where *application* is the name of the application and *n* is the drive letter where the application files reside.

When Disk Defragmenter (Defrag.exe) runs, it gathers information from all the *lgn* files and build an Applog.dtn file, one for each drive. The Applog.dtn file contains information about cluster placement optimization instructions which are read by Defrag.exe. Defrag.exe uses this information to place disk clusters in the optimized order so that programs start up faster.

Important Notice: Disk Defragmenter does not work with most third party compression utilities, nor will it work on read-only drives, locked drives, network drives, FFS drives, or drives created with ASSIGN, SUBST, or JOIN.

How Do I Defragment? Follow the process listed below to defragment your disks:

1. Click **Start**, select **Programs, Accessories, System Tools**, and then **Disk Defragmenter**; or select **Start and Run**, and then type **defrag**.
2. In the **Select Drive** dialog box, specify the drive that requires defragmentation.
3. Click the **Settings** button if you want to do any of the following:
 - ◆ Rearrange program files so they start faster;
 - ◆ Check the drive for errors; or
 - ◆ Choose the above options for this session only or for all sessions.
4. Click **OK**.

Tip: Showing details while the Disk Defragmenter is running causes it to take longer than it does when showing only summary information or running it minimized. For quickest performance, minimize the Disk Defragmenter window while the utility is running.

To see defragmentation information for a particular drive, in My Computer, right-click the drive's icon. Select **Properties**, and then click the **Tools** tab. The **Tools Properties** dialog box shows the number of days since the last complete defragmentation process ran on the drive. You can also run Disk Defragmenter from this dialog box.

Note: Excessive disk activity by other programs can interfere with defragmentation and may cause Disk Defragmenter to restart frequently and take an inordinate amount of time to complete. It is best if you make sure that **no other programs are running** before you start to Defrag your hard drive. *Some screen savers cause excessive disk activity.* To prevent screen savers from running during defragmentation, change the screen saver to **None** from Display in the Control Panel. Also make sure to change power-schemes to “**always on**” from Power Management in the Control Panel. **X**

Information compiled from MSDN sources.

Training Classes: Your Chance to Advance

Standard Estimating Class

It is structured to take you from "Job Startup" clear through "Bid Summary." In-depth instruction helps students with good manual experience get up on line.

Advanced Management Class

This class is designed for the database manager or chief estimator. Students attending this three-day class will drill down into the bottom of the program and learn how to build specification formulas, reports and

reports formulas, keyboard mapping, setting up security, and more. You should be proficient in all takeoff phases of the McCormick product.

Upcoming Schedule

All classes are held at McCormick's training center (generally from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.) in Mesa, Ariz. Class sizes are limited! Contact Jody Dougherty or Loriel McCormick at 800-444-4890.

June 13 – 15

Standard Estimating Class

July 11 – 13

Standard Estimating Class

July 18 – 20

Advanced Management Class

July 25 – 27

Standard Estimating Class

Aug. 8 – 10

Standard Estimating Class

Aug. 22 – 24

Standard Estimating Class

Sept. 12 – 14

Standard Estimating Class

Sept. 19 – 21

Advanced Management Class

Sept. 26 – 28

Standard Estimating Class

Oct. 3 – 5

Standard Estimating Class

Oct. 10 – 12

Standard Estimating Class

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McCormick Is Where You Are... at Industry Trade Shows

Electric 2001

Orlando, Florida

June 25, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

June 26, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

June 27, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Booth #1824

IEC Expo

Las Vegas, Nevada

October 1–4

NECA Show 2001

Washington, D.C.

October 21–23