

The McCormick Letter

The Nation's Leader in Estimating Software

April 2001

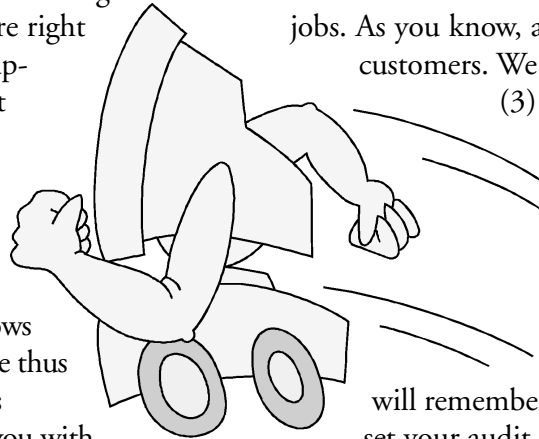
6.5 Upgrade Is Rolling Out Now!

Those on Support Can Obtain Update Via Internet

Three significant enhancements are coming to your McCormick Systems software right now, as we roll out our version 6.5 upgrade. If your company has a support contract with us, you can obtain this -- at no additional cost-- via the Internet. Here's a look at what we've added with this new upgrade.

(1) **Power Probes Plus** is now compliant with Windows NT, Windows 2000, and Windows 95/98/ME. We've thus eliminated the need for the Power Plus adapter. Additionally, we've provided you with the ability to customize your sounds. You can choose between "no sound," a PC speaker, and using a sound card with customizable sound and volume control.

(2) You asked for this, and McCormick has provided it—**resizable bid summary and label screens**. Your estimating efficiency just went up. You can now see more of a job on your computer monitor, no matter what the



size. You'll be able to—quickly—get a clear view of larger jobs. As you know, at McCormick we listen to our customers. We heard you on this one!

(3) **Advanced audit trail settings**. In the past, while you could customize your audit trail settings, our system didn't respond. When you returned to the audit trail, you had to go through the work of re-doing the settings.

Now, McCormick's software will remember the settings you prefer. When you set your audit trail, it's SET. When you come back, the system will "remember"—and return to and display—your last settings.

How Can You Get the 6.5 Update?

If you're on support, it's ready now. Not on support? Call the Arizona office — 800-444-4890—for more information. ✕

This Newsletter Will Now Come To You Monthly!

We've learned from talking to our customers that you need to know more and more about how your computer systems operate and how to make better use of what McCormick Systems offers! We believe that if we make this newsletter more available, you'll take advantage of what we offer and the tips and hints we can provide.

That's why we're shifting this newsletter, effective with this issue, to a monthly publication. We'll try to provide you with **More**—not only more capabilities and depth in our software systems, but also more information and advice here in print.

If you have any comments, please forward them to me—tmccormick@mccormicksys.com. —*Todd McCormick*

Did You Know...You can do simple math in the count/length window as you take-off.

Highlights

<i>Version 6.5 Upgrade Rolling Out</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Newsletter Becomes Monthly</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Learn Networking Basics</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>You Can Do VDV Estimating</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Frequently Asked Questions</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Training Schedule</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Trade Show Exhibit Schedule</i>	<i>4</i>

Networking Basics: If You're Not Alone, Your Company Needs A Network!

Many customers ask us about Networking. That's why we've put together this two-part series (part two will appear in the May newsletter) on networking for electrical contractors with computerized estimating departments.

Don't stop reading if you're a "small" firm—this applies to you!

Thanks to new technology, networking is more affordable than it used to be. Anyone, literally, can walk into an electronic store and walk out with some network cable, some Ethernet cards...and be in business!

You don't really need specialized knowledge to network your estimating computers. You don't need a central server. All you really need is the hardware and some "plug-and-play" operating systems. This stuff is user-friendly, and the configurations have been made simpler.

We're not talking here about a sophisticated network that a VDV contractor would market to his customers. We're talking about a "peer-to-peer" network. Microsoft recommends that you do not put more than 10 to 15 units on a peer-to-peer network, and, in our experience, that's a solid recommendation.

Do you have more than one computer and fewer than 16? If so, perhaps you ought to look into networking. You'll gain

- ✓ increased security,
- ✓ centralized data management,
- ✓ centralized application management,
- ✓ communications, including sharing high-speed access to the Internet,
- ✓ resource-sharing, and
- ✓ other abilities that, once upon a time, were the domain only of larger companies.

If you are a larger company, of course, you'll want to look at larger-scale operations—domains, workgroups, and server-based network computing. But if you have 15-or-fewer computers, you can have all of the advantages of networking without the complications.

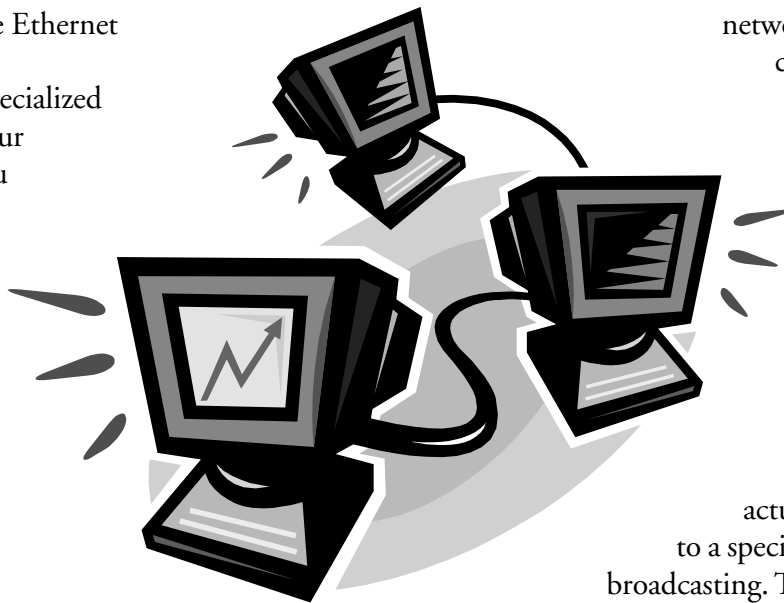
For you larger companies: Even if you DO go to server-based networking, you don't necessarily have to go with the Microsoft domain model. You can set up a stand-alone server, a group of Windows 98 or Windows ME satellites. In this way, you'll avoid the biggest headaches of setting up a sophisticated network—domain security; of course, you won't get those advantages, either.

One basic question we are often asked is: *Should I buy a hub or should I buy a switch?* The answer is as simple as this: The hub sprays the data in your network everywhere, "broadcasting" it to all stations, while the switch will actually route it—sending data to a specific destination rather than broadcasting. The difference, then, is in your network's speed.

Right now switches cost next to nothing, so by all means, think about using a switch. Recently, in our part of Arizona, we were able to buy a Linksys five-port switch for just \$60. Such a switch fits in the palm of your hand. It offers the advantage of basically "remembering" where the network protocols are going. You will notice a tremendous gain in speed in your network.

Note that this advice about networks applies *not* only to larger companies. Contractors with just three electrical estimators ask us if they should move to a network. The answer is YES! Just the fact that you'll be able to send files to each other, instead of exchanging floppies, will make it worthwhile—beyond all of the other advantages. ✕

Next month look for Part Two of this two-part series Networking — The McCormick Way!



More Than You'll Need Already in Our VDV Database You Can Have VDV Estimating—Today!

With our customers flying into the Voice-Data-Video market, McCormick Systems is right alongside of you—building a capability second to none in VDV estimating.

We have plenty of key items in our database. We are working on updating VDV items through Trade Service's Tra-Ser service. You can add items to our database by simply marking them in Tra-Ser and importing them.

One problem you might run into—at least, we've found this so far—is that it's difficult to obtain price updating of VDV items. In our experience, VDV prices change very often.

What's more, as it is a fast-moving market, the VDV items themselves change rapidly, unlike your experience (and ours) in standard electrical construction.

Today, we have many VDV assemblies put together. You can create your own, of course, on the fly—just by marking the items or assemblies and moving them into the program.

What's more, we've moved VDV estimating into the future—unlike any other software vendor. With the McCormick CAD Estimating program, the user will be able to take-off a VDV drawing from AutoCAD drawings!

Note that attendees at the McCormick User's Conference in late March were able to see the VDV database and the CAD Estimating Interface program in person. For more information, call Dick Manrod at 800-444-4890. ✕

What's In McCormick's VDV Database?

Here are some of the items you'll find in our VDV database—so far:

- ✓ 66 and 110 blocks and accessories
- ✓ Category 5 level 5 & 6 data cable
- ✓ Voice and data patch cables
- ✓ Racks (with accessories)
- ✓ Wall cabinets for copper and fiber
- ✓ Free-standing cabinets for copper and fiber
- ✓ Voice outlets
- ✓ Category 3, 5 and 6 outlets
- ✓ Surface raceway and boxes
- ✓ Fiber cable (with accessories)
- ✓ Fiber adapters, connectors, and more
- ✓ Fiber shelf kits and related
- ✓ Innerduct
- ✓ Wall duct
- ✓ TV, CATV, and CCTV parts (and accessories)

Frequently Asked Questions

Questions Estimators Are Asking McCormick

Q. How many programs can I safely run at once?

A. If you have ever spent a morning typing a report in a word-processing application, only to find that you didn't have the *autosave* feature turned on before your system crashed—you may already know the answer to this.

Certain operating systems are better in this respect. Windows NT and Windows 2000 are better able to manage multiple business applications due to their architecture. Windows95/98 and Windows ME are more prone to full system crashes and, thus, the answer in their case may be . . . *only the one that you are working in.*

Q. How can I review my takeoff?

A. If there is more than one user doing takeoff on a job, it is possible to review the specific user's takeoff by logging on as that user and opening an advanced audit trail. By clicking on the My Takeoff button, you can toggle between the total takeoff and your own takeoff.

Additionally, by opening a *print preview*, you may view and print out your entire takeoff or your own, depending on the filter that you have selected. ✕

Send us questions, on any estimating or software topic, that you would like to have answered in our newsletter.



Training = Better Productivity—Sign Up Today!

Standard Estimating Class

Popular demand has now led McCormick to offer this three-day class twice a month! It is structured to take you from “Job Startup” clear through “Bid Summary.” In-depth instruction helps students with good manual experience up on the line. Those already using McCormick products get valuable “brush-up” exposure—which typically helps them get more out of the system.

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. To attend this powerful class, you must be proficient in all takeoff phases of the McCormick product and have an understanding regarding what your company requires at this level.

Upcoming Schedule

All classes below will be held at McCormick’s training center in Mesa, Ariz. Classes start at 8 a.m. and wind up at about 5 p.m. daily. **Class sizes are limited!** Contact Jody Dougherty or Loriel Allen—800-444-4890—for further details or to register.

May 2 – 4

Advanced Management Class

May 9 – 11

Standard Estimating Class

May 16 – 18

Standard Estimating Class

June 6 – 8

Standard Estimating Class

June 13 – 15

Standard Estimating Class

www.McCormickSys.com

Fax 480/820-2422

480/831-8914

800/444-4890

McCormick Is Where You Are

ElecTech '01 -- Boston

April 18 & April 19

1 to 8 p.m. each day

Booth #727

NECA's VDV Expo 2001

Las Vegas, Nevada

May 20-21

Electric 2001

Orlando, Florida

June 25-27

IEC Expo

Las Vegas, Nevada

October 1-4

NECA 2001

Washington, D.C.

October 21-23

Mesa AZ 85202

1255 W Baseline #138

McCormick Systems

The McCormick Letter