



Textual Information Manager

Computerised catalogues and inventories can offer considerable advantages in terms of speed, ease, flexibility and security. Information technology makes light work of searching for a needle in a haystack. However, the relatively unstructured nature of descriptive information contained in traditional catalogues, combined with the need for rapid selection and retrieval by complex search criteria, means that many conventional database management systems are ill suited to dealing with museum collections.

TIM provides a solution to these problems. Designed to deal with textual and visual documents, **TIM** lets you create, store, modify, index and retrieve the information you need quickly and easily.

TIM places no limits on the number of documents stored in a data base. Each document may contain up to 255 free-text fields and up to **100** associated images.

TIM is both sophisticated and simple to use. 'Pull-down' menus give easy access to all the programme's functions but a command line mode is also available. A powerful macro function allows specialised functions to be added.

TIM lets you put password restrictions on sensitive information and allows selective access. Full 'journaling' ensures data security in the event of power failure.

Four levels of indexing, sophisticated report generation and a multi-national user interface provide a highly flexible basis for the development, maintenance and exploitation of data base applications.

TIM runs on all IBM compatible computers with at least 512K of memory and DOS 2.11 or higher.

Hardware requirements

TIM runs on IBM compatible computers using DOS 2.11 or higher. **TIM** requires at least 264K of memory but can take advantage of more. Overlays can take advantage of EMS memory. **TIM** runs in text mode.

Programme :

TIM is programmed using Turbo Pascal 5.5 from Borland. **TIM** provides facilities for customizing the language interface, (French and English are currently available) programme menus, data structures, and help facilities. Macro commands can also be written.



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Benefits of using TIM

- i)TIM allows very long fields to be manipulated - up to 4000 characters. This allows textual data to be entered, stored, indexed and retrieved. As far as I know, most DBMS programmes put a limit of 255 characters per field, or allow only one 'memo field' which exceeds this length. TIM fields are all variable length so there is no need to predefine their maximum capacity. However, the space occupied on disk is only slightly higher than that used by the 'raw' data.
- ii)The definition of the data structures is extremely flexible. Modifications can be made 'on the fly' without needing to reload the database. Fields can be added, or removed, the order modified, links added to other data bases etc.
- iii)TIM allows multiple level indexing : by word, phrase, paragraph, or using a user-defined set of separators.
- iv)Flexible user interface. TIM provides a 'windows' style interface using pull-down menus etc. However, command line input is also possible for the impatient and mouse-allergic. The menu system can be customized as needed and the user can select which language to work in - French or English at present. This affects the messages, menus, replies to 'yes/no' prompts and on-line help. Commands are always accepted in either French or English.
- v)Presentation of documents is very flexible. Masks can be defined to display or print data in lines, blocks, columns or combinations of all three. Standard editions are available for rapid output.

Support

A 40 page manual explains the basic operation and functions of TIM from installation to backups. Experienced computer users usually require nothing more than this. Context-sensitive on-line help is also available as an 'aide-mémoire' for command syntax etc.

Problems encountered using the programme (questions, suspected bugs or requests for modification) need to come back to me. A standard protocol is provided which can be sent by post or faxed. If necessary, minor corrections are made immediately and a diskette sent by post. Otherwise a report is sent with an estimate of the time needed to make the adjustment. Updates are sent to registered users at least twice a year.



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Extensions

A number of optional extensions to the programme are available

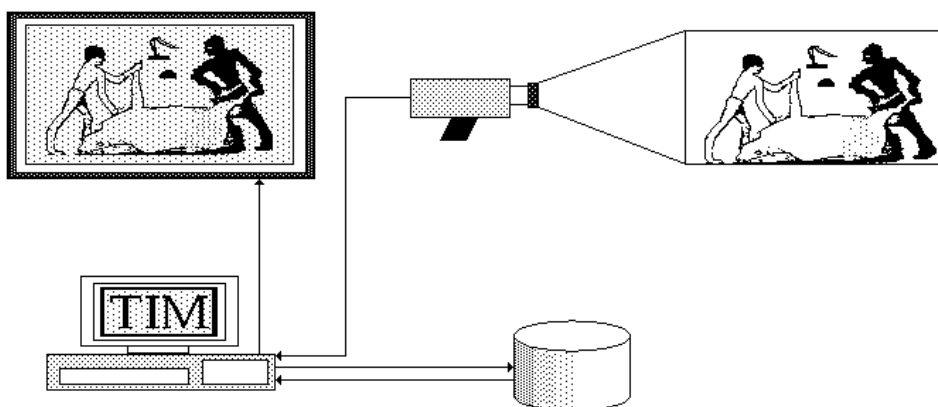
- Storage and retrieval of images
- ISO standard thesaurus
- Multi-user network access
- Programmable SQL query interface

Customized modules written in Turbo Pascal or Turbo C can be compiled into the programme if requested.

Potential customers :

- Museums, archives and other places which look after collections of one sort or another.
- Galleries, needing to keep track of customers and ouvres d'art.
- Public relations departments dealing with address lists and correspondence.
- Libraries, for books and journals.
- Archives for document plan and descriptive notices

Image management





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Existing clients

These institutions are already using TIM:

- Les Musées d'art et d'histoire, Genève
- Le Département d'anthropologie de l'Université de Genève
- L'Académie Internationale de la Céramique
- Le Musée Cantonal d'Archéologie et d'Histoire, Lausanne
- Les archives de Mario Botta
- La Société de Psychanalyse, Genève



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Cost :

The pricing structure is the following:

Plan A 1000 CHF gets you the programme, plus free updates and technical assistance for **1 year**. After that you're on your own.

Plan B 2000 CHF gets you the same as plan A except that you can continue to receive updates and technical help after the first year for **200 CHF**.

Plan C 5000 CHF gets you a 'site licence' - the right to make up to **10** copies for use by one organisation. Copies may not be distributed to other individuals or organisations. Continuing support is available for **500 CHF** per year.

Users under plan A may upgrade their licence to plan B during the **12** months following the purchase.

Nick Crofts, Geneva February 1992