



VIRTUAL COIN CABINET II

USER MANUAL

for

Coin Collectors and Dealers

Print Tags, Illustrated Catalogs, and Lists

with

Professional Collection-Inventory Features

for

**All Coins, Tokens, and Medals of All Ages
and numismatic material of all kinds**

VCC2: version 2v1 released July 2003

by



Data ex Machina

<http://www.dataxm.com>

**This Manual contains
the full text and illustrations of the built-in Help System,
plus the GETTING STARTED document
and a Table of Contents**

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Installation / Getting Started

The **Virtual Coin Cabinet II**

VCC2 from Data ex Machina

Minimum System Requirements

Windows: Windows 98, Windows ME, Windows 2000, and Windows NT 4.0 (Service Pack 6 or later), or newer.

Hardware: an Intel-compatible (Pentium 90 or higher-rated processor) with at least 32 MB of RAM

Disk Space: at least 60 MB of unused disk space

Mac Classic: OS 8.6 through all OS 9.2 updates.

(Upgrade OS 9.0 through 9.0.3 to at least 9.0.4.)

Hardware: at least 32 MB of RAM

Disk Space: at least 60 MB of unused disk space

Mac OS X: OS X version 10.1 or later (including "Jaguar")

Hardware: at least 128 MB of RAM (required by OS X)

Disk Space: at least 60 MB of unused disk space.

Installation

Use the Installer file for your computer's system. To find it look in:

> Downloaded: Locate the installer where your browser saved it, on the desktop or in a download folder.

> Windows CD: open "My Computer" icon on your desktop, then open the CD icon. Double-click "Setup VCC2.exe".

> Macintosh CD: open the CD icon. Use the installer for your current OS version.*

The installer will provide you with step-by-step instructions.

Read all information on the installer screens. The installer will ask you to select a location on your hard disk to install VCC2. Follow the instructions given in the installer for where to install the program. It will be different for each computer system.

* DO NOT INSTALL BOTH VERSIONS FOR MACINTOSH on one computer. Your computer may attempt to use the wrong one when you open the program because both use the same file extensions.

Using Your Old Records / Using HELP and the Manual

Follow the instructions under the Upgrading topics of VCC's built-in Help system.

Navigating Records: The first time you open the program a screen explains how to navigate your records using the new "flip-book."

Use the built-in **HELP** System to view any topic about the program or to **print VCC's User Manual**.

Troubleshooting While Getting Started

If the installer won't run in Windows

Windows will not allow an installer to run if a user does not have permission to modify some settings. This is controlled by the user/administrator settings, even if you are on a non-networked machine. See your computer operating system manual for help with these "permissions" problems. If you ARE on a network, check with your network administrator.

If VCC installed but won't run in Windows

Windows requires files that are part of a standard installation, but some computers do not have Microsoft's full system. Two Windows DLL files are the most likely missing pieces: COMCTL32.DLL and SHFOLDER.DLL

VCC users who are missing these files can obtain them by going to Microsoft's web site for free downloads.

If VCC quits unexpectedly in OS X

OS X will occasionally let a program launch, but then it quits unexpectedly. This is usually the result of a UNIX "permissions" error. Either log in as the "Root" user and reinstall the software, or repair the permissions. These are OS X problems covered in OS X documentation. These are not VCC errors even though they can affect VCC's ability to run.

Technical Support

Technical Support is provided through the built-in Help system. Eligibility for live technical support is explained on our website at: <http://www.dataxm.com>

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HELP! HOW TO USE HELP

Navigating the Help System

The Virtual Coin Cabinet II (VCC2) Help System is a collection of topics which tell you how to use the program's features and answer the questions usually asked of technical support. It includes all of the User Manual, instructions for upgrading from older programs, setting preferences, and using all of the features provided in the program's buttons and menus.

To find any topic, click on the large RED button. A screen appears showing all of the major Help Topics as buttons.

Click on a Topic to go to that Topic's details. A list of the topic's sections appears in a list (on the left of the screen) in the order they are intended to be read. The name of the section which is on screen appears in red in the sections list to help you keep track of where you are.

Click on a section in the list, and that section appears on screen.

- Read it or print the Topic to have it for reference later. The "Print Topic" button prints all of the sections in a Topic at once just as they appear in the Manual.

- Click each section button until you have read the entire Topic.

The Sections list and the text area have active scroll bars if there is more content than fits on the screen.

Technical Support: Beyond Help

Technical Support is provided primarily through this Help system.

Live Technical Support is available to those who have paid for a technical support subscription. Obtaining technical support is explained on our web site:

<http://www.dataxm.com>

You are welcome to use VCC2 and rely on its built-in Help System and Manual even if you have not paid for support, however...

Do not ask for live technical support unless you are a paid technical support subscriber. We do not provide live technical support to unpaid users. (This includes our relatives, best friends, "good buddies" and people with "just one simple question.")

We no longer provide technical support for older versions. Registration of older versions does not qualify you for live technical support of a newer version.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Windows Computers

Windows Minimum Requirements

Systems: Windows 98*, Windows ME, Windows 2000, and Windows NT 4.0 (Service Pack 6 or later).

Hardware: an Intel-compatible (Pentium 90 or higher-rated processor) with at least 32 MB of RAM

Disk Space: at least 60 MB of unused disk space

* If you are using Windows 95 or earlier, use the original version of The Virtual Coin Cabinet. (Contact Data ex Machina for details.)

Macintosh Classic: OS 8.6 thru 9.2

Macintosh computers now come with OSX installed, but millions of Macintosh users still use earlier system versions, now called "Classic." There is one VCC2 version for Classic and another for OSX, so be careful to install the correct version for your preferred OS. The installer for OSX will not run on Classic. The installer for Classic installs a Classic-only version of the software (which does not run on OSX without Classic).

Mac "Classic" Requirements

Systems: OS 8.6* through OS 9.2 updates. OS 8.6 is okay, but OS 9.0 through 9.03 should be upgraded to at least 9.0.4 for problem-free performance. OS 9.1 or later is recommended.

Hardware: at least 32 MB of RAM

Disk Space: at least 60 MB of unused disk space

* If you are still using OS 8.5 or earlier, use the original version of The Virtual Coin Cabinet. (Contact Data ex Machina for details.)

Macintosh OS X

Macintosh computers now come with OSX installed. Use the VCC2 installer for OS X only. (If the Mac CLASSIC installer is run on OSX, it will switch you into Classic mode and install a Classic-only version of VCC2.)

Mac OS X Requirements

Systems: OS X version 10.1 or later. ("Jaguar" was included in testing.)

Hardware: at least 128 MB of RAM (required by OS X)

Disk Space: at least 60 MB of unused disk space

INSTALLATION & SAVING OLD RECORDS

Installation

Use the installer program which matches your operating system. Installers can be downloaded from our web site (<http://www.dataxm.com>) or run from an installation CD. (see System Requirements topic)

Locate the Installer file for your computer system and open it. The installer will be in one of these locations:

If you downloaded it from the web, where your browser placed it, usually the desktop or in a download folder.

On a Windows CD, open "My Computer" on your desktop, then open the CD icon to see the installer program icon.

On a Macintosh CD, open the CD icon and select the installer for your system.

A "wizard" will provide you with step-by-step instructions.

Be sure to read all information on the installer screens. Installers have the latest information about that version of the program.

The installer will ask you to select a location on your hard disk to install VCC2. Follow the instructions given in the installer for where to install the program directory (folder). It will be different for each computer system. The typical locations are:

Windows: inside "My Documents"

Mac Classic: inside the Applications folder

Mac OS X: inside the "Home" folder bearing your user name (or your "Shared" folder, if you want others users of that computer to be able to log in and use it)

If you install the program in a location other than the instructions indicate, installation may fail, and you may have difficulty locating it later. Technical Support assumes you installed the program AS INSTRUCTED by the installer.

Never install a new version of the program into the directory (folder) of an older VCC version or inside a directory/folder of another program.

The installer will place a shortcut/alias of VCC2 on your desktop to make it easy to launch. (Mac OSX users may want to drag the alias into the Dock if it is not placed there by the installer.)

DO NOT INSTALL BOTH VERSIONS FOR MACINTOSH on one computer. Your computer could attempt to open the wrong one each time you launch the program because they both use the same file extensions.

Saving Old Records

Records from older versions of VCC (and many other programs) can be moved into VCC2 by following the instructions under the Upgrading topics. Installing VCC2 does not replace or modify earlier VCC versions or other program files. It is a separate and new program. Older program files and folders/directories are still on your computer disk after installing the new version.

You may need to prepare the records stored in your old software before they are ready to bring into VCC2. Read the "Upgrading from..." topics to quickly move all of your records from your old files into VCC2.

The Virtual Coin Cabinet's features make it more useful than older programs used by many dealers and collectors to track their coins, but the thought of having to enter all that information again keeps them from switching to something better.

VCC2 ends that frustration by allowing information from other programs to be copied into it in a few steps, and preserving all of your old records at once! The "Upgrading" topics walk you through that process.

UPGRADING FROM OLDER VCC FILES

Preserving Your Old Records

Installing the latest version does not remove or modify any older versions of VCC. VCC2 is a separate new program. Older program files, folders or directories are untouched on your computer disk.

This section explains the automated process to quickly move all of your records from older VCC files into VCC2.

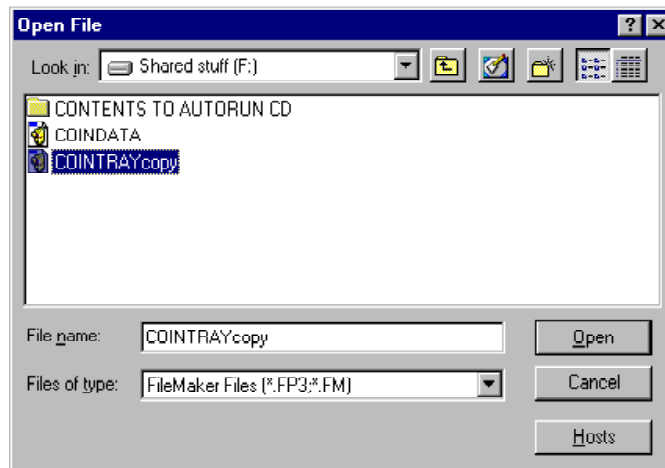
Preparing older VCC files for the upgrade: The rest of this section applies only to earlier VCC files. (If you are moving records from any Version of VCC2, including the Beta, skip this section and go on to "Locating Your Old Records.")

Before moving records from VCC versions 1.0-1.2, you need to prepare the old file's records.

1. Open the OLD version of the program on your hard drive.
2. Click the View All button on the left side of the main screen, or select the Find All Records item in the Find menu.

This prepares older VCC files to move all existing records. **IF YOU SKIP THIS STEP ONLY RECORDS WHICH WERE IN THE CURRENT FOUND SET WHEN THE FILE WAS LAST CLOSED WILL BE COPIED.**

3. Exit/Quit the old version, and read "Locating Your Old Records"



Locating Your Old Records

Open the new version of VCC2.

Select "Import / Export..." from the VCC Actions menu. This will start a series of dialog boxes with instructions.

1. On the first pop-up dialog, click the Import button.
2. Read the on-screen instructions, and clicking Continue.

An OPEN FILE screen will appear to locate the file which stored your old records.

(Windows screens are shown in this topic. Macintosh screens for the same dialog boxes are shown in the topic "Upgrading from Other Programs", but all instructions work on both systems.)

3. Set the "Show" or "Files of Type" to show all "available" or all "readable" file types so older VCC file types will be visible in the list. The file name will be COINTRAY / COINTRAY.VCC (or COINDATA / COINDATA.VC2 in VCC2 and the Beta version). It may also have a name you gave it if you created the file as a backup or renamed it.

If you are not sure where to locate the file, it is normally in the old program folder/directory. For old VCC files that should be one of these locations:

Windows — inside a directory named VCCFLDR or VCC1, inside your My Documents folder, or at the root level of the hard drive (usually the C drive).

Macintosh — inside a folder named Virtual Coin Cabinet Folder or VCC1.

You can use your computer's "Find" utility to search for a file whose name contains "Cointray" or "Coindata" if it is not in one of those locations.

4. Locate the file and select/highlight it in the list.
5. Click the OPEN button while the correct file is highlighted to continue.

Converting Older Version Files

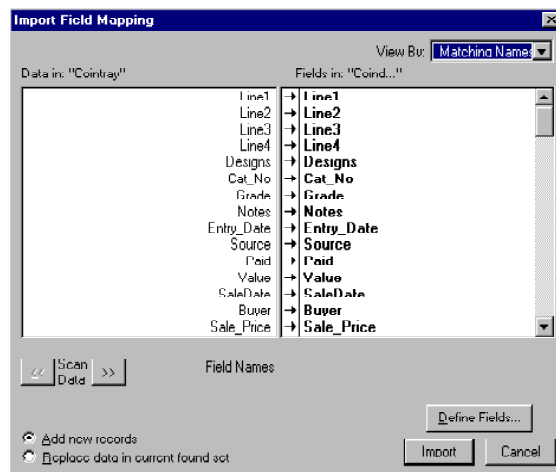
Once you click the OPEN button while the correct file is highlighted, you MAY be told on-screen that the file needs to be converted. This is because the file type changed between versions. VCC2 is a new program. If you are copying records from a VCC2 file, no file conversion will occur.

If you are asked where to save the converted file, select a location where you can quickly and easily locate it later. (After the records have been copied into the new program you should locate and delete any old converted file.)

- Do not attempt to save it to a location on a disk without enough disk space (or to a locked disk, such as any type of CD). It will fail to work if it cannot freely write the converted file before transferring the records.

- Do not rename the converted file to avoid a possible conflict with other files used by this program. Accept the default name assigned by the program.

The "Field Mapping Window" will then appear.



Using the Field Mapping Window

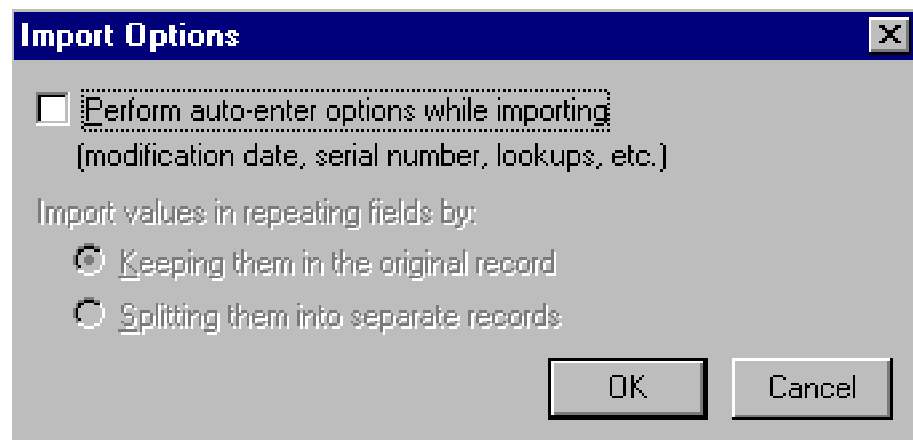
The Field Mapping window sets which fields in this program will receive the data from the old file's fields.

1. Select Matching Names in the selection area at the upper right of the box. This assures that information is moved from fields into fields with the same name.
2. Select the "Add new records" option at the lower left to assure that the imported data actually creates new records.

Do not change the order of matching fields and do not click on the arrows between field names.* If you make changes to the import order, your new records could become a jumble of data. Selecting the Matching Names option again before you leave the window resets the correct order.

* You may want to turn OFF the arrows into any fields you do not want changed during the import, such as default field labels.

3. Click the IMPORT button, and go on to "Finishing the Import Options"



Finishing the Import Options

The Import Options dialog window appears. This is the last step before records are copied into the new file.

Leave the Perform auto-enter options choice UNchecked.

Click the OK button to finish.

VCC2 will now create new records which contain all of the information and images which existed in your old program. This may take a while, depending on how many records, how many pictures, and size of the digital images you had saved in the program.

When it has finished, the new records will appear as the "found set" of records on the main screen. You may want to edit them or add information. There are some new data fields in VCC2, so old records imported into VCC2 will have some blank fields.

UPGRADING FROM OTHER PROGRAMS

Useable Program File Formats

The Virtual Coin Cabinet's features are superior to older programs used by many dealers and collectors to track their collections and inventory, but the thought of having to enter all that information again keeps them from changing programs.

VCC ends that frustration by allowing information from other programs to be copied into VCC quickly, preserving all of your old records at once! This section walks you through that process.

The Virtual Coin Cabinet can import many file formats:

- DBF database files
- DIF spreadsheet files
- Excel spreadsheets
- FileMaker Pro files (FP3 and FP5 formats)
- XML (extensible markup language)

and the most versatile file format:

- TEXT FILES saved from most other programs.

The first step is to determine the file type of your old records, or whether your old program will provide any help in getting them out. If your old program uses one of the file types listed above, you may well be able to import them directly. If so, you may be able to skip "Creating a Transfer File" but it won't hurt to read it in case some changes are needed.

Creating a Transfer File

If your old file type is not compatible for direct import, there is usually a simple way to quickly move the data anyway.

Most programs which store data or "cells" will let you save or "export" the files in one of the useable file formats listed earlier, even if it is not the "native" file format of the program. Saving or exporting to a text file is usually a safe choice.

Check the pull-down menus in your program for options to save the data in another format, or, in the "Save as..." command, you may find options to select or change the file format to be saved.

Select an option to save a file in one of the compatible formats for importing the data into the Virtual Coin Cabinet. If your program allows saving a file in Text format, it should provide choices which allow either tab-delimited text or comma-delimited text. Both of these are easy for VCC2 to use for creating new records.

Once you have saved a file in a useable format, Exit/Quit the old program, and follow the steps in the next section (Importing a Non-VCC File Format). Be sure you know the location of the file you just saved (its directory location on your computer's drive) so you can locate it easily in the following instructions.

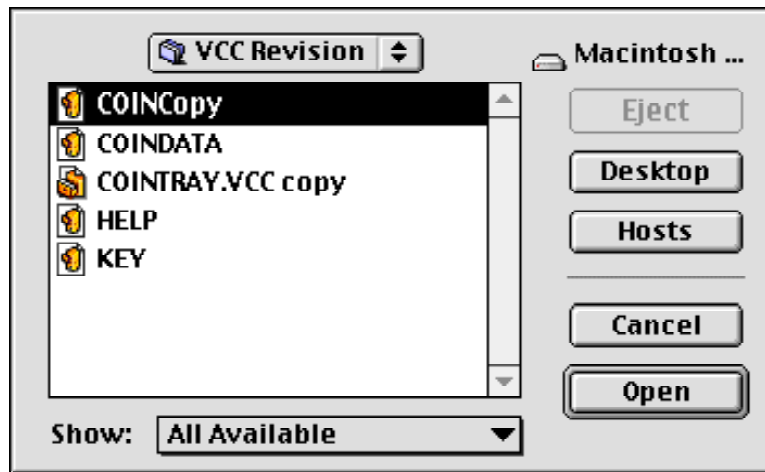
Importing a Non-VCC File Format

To use a non-VCC file to create new records:

1. Select "Import / Export..." from the VCC Actions menu.

This will begin a series of dialog boxes with instructions and choices.

2. On the first pop-up dialog, click the Import button. Read the on-screen instructions.
3. Click the Continue button and the OPEN FILE dialog box appears.



Locating the Record Data File

The OPEN FILE screen will appear to open the file you saved in the previous section or the compatible data file from your old program.

(Macintosh screens are shown in this topic. Windows screens for the same dialog boxes are shown in the topic "Upgrading from Older VCC Files", but all instructions work on both systems.)

1. Set the "Show" / "Files of Type" to the type of file you saved, so your "source" file will appear in the list. This also tells VCC2 which file translator to use in reading the file's contents.
2. Locate your source file, select/highlight it. (We warned you that you would need to know where it is. Use your computer's Find program if necessary to discover its location. It will not be visible unless the correct file type is chosen in the "Show" / "Files of Type" area.)
3. Click the OPEN button, and go to the next section.

Converting Data Files on Importing

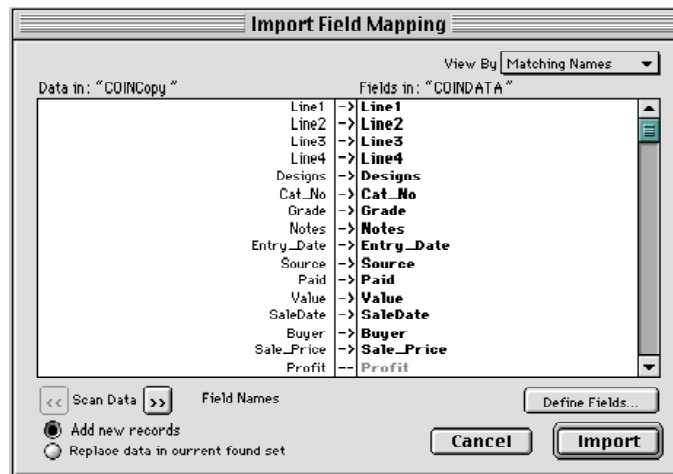
Once you click the OPEN button while the correct file is highlighted, you MAY be told on-screen that the file still needs to be converted. This happens primarily with database files, especially old FileMaker Pro data files.

If you are asked where to save the converted file, select a location where you can quickly and easily locate it later. (After the records have been copied into the new program you will want to locate and delete the converted file.)

- Do NOT attempt to save it to a location on a disk without enough disk space or to a locked disk, such as any type of CD. It will fail to work if it cannot freely write the converted file before transferring the records.

- Do not rename the converted file to avoid a possible conflict with other files used by this program. Accept its default name assigned by the program.

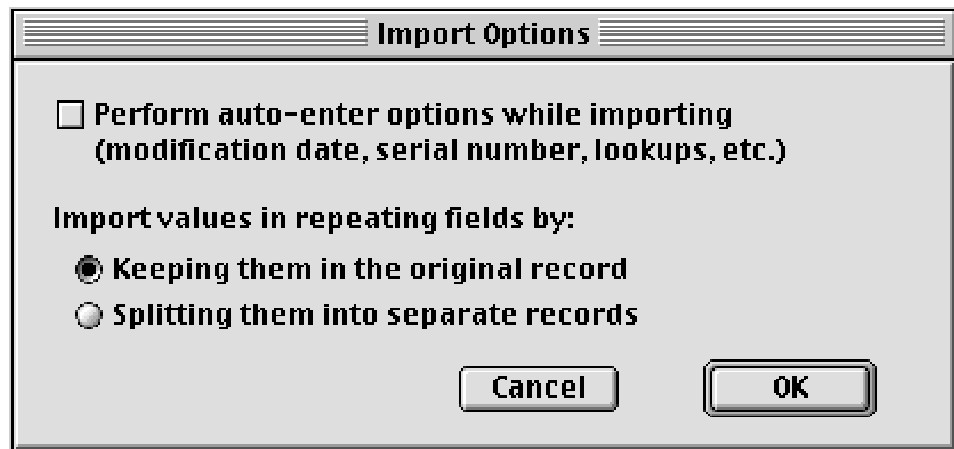
The "Field Mapping Window" will then appear.



Field Mapping Your Data

The Field Mapping window sets which fields in VCC2 will receive each piece of data from your old file while moving your old records.

1. Select the "Add new records" option at the lower left to assure that the imported data actually creates new records in VCC2.
2. Use the Scan Data button to see some of the actual data from your old file (on the left) next to VCC2's field list on the right. Use only one set of sample data to line up fields. That order will apply to all imported data. You can scan additional data for information, but you can only set one import order per imported file, regardless of how many records it contains.
3. Start with the first line of source data on the left and drag the correct field up to match it on the right. Then do the same with the second and each following piece of data on the left until all lines of incoming data have been assigned a field on the right with an active arrow between them.
4. When you move a field by sliding it up or down to replace another field name, the field you replaced may disappear to near the end of the list, requiring that you scroll to find it later.
5. When you have the data lined up with the fields you want to use, make sure the arrows between them are dark arrows. (Some fields in VCC2 will not allow data importing because they are not data storage fields. Do not select fields for importing that won't allow the import arrow, or the data you attempt to place there will be missing when the new records are created.) Also BE SURE the arrows are DISABLED into any fields you do NOT want changed during import, such as the "label" fields for your main screen.
6. Click the Import button and go on to "Finishing the Import Options"



Finishing the Import Options

On the Import Options dialog screen, click OK to create the new records from your old data.

The new program will create new records which contain all of the data you saved from your old program in the fields you selected on the Field Mapping screen. When it has finished, the newly created records will be the “found set” showing on the main screen. They may require some editing to add additional information or images.

INTRODUCTION TO VCC

What is VCC?

The Virtual Coin Cabinet II (VCC2) is a group of database files and a software program which runs them.

It was developed in FileMaker Pro and output as a stand-alone program which uses FileMaker's run-time engine (version 6.0v4).

It is distributed by an installer program which places the program files on your hard drive so it will run on your computer.

Keep all files together in the original directory (folder) and **DO NOT MOVE OR RENAME** any of them to avoid problems in running the program. The program looks for the needed files in the same location each time a file is required. If files have been moved or renamed, the program may not be able to run properly.

Always open the program using the shortcut/alias placed on your desktop by the installer, or double-click the "Virtual Coin Cabinet" program file, not its data files.

When you make copies of your coin data file for backups, always name the backup copy differently than the original file to avoid a conflict in the program. Save backup copies to a removable disk which is not mounted while the program is running (except during the backup).

Files explained

"Files" are the separate computer documents located in the program directory (folder) on your computer disk. The file to be most concerned with is the "COINDATA" file. It is where VCC2 stores all of the data you enter in creating records of your collection. Other files do not contain data you create or change, and they can be replaced if necessary. Replacing the "COINDATA" file without having a backup will destroy your existing records.

Records and Fields

"Records" are the collection of fields which hold information describing a single item. All of the fields for one Record appears on the main screen together. There can be any number of records in your file, one for each item you have entered. A search (find) is a way of locating a group of records based on their field contents. The result of any search is a "Found Set" of records.

"Fields" are the spaces which hold specific pieces of information about a record. The "date" and "value" are examples of different fields. Entering the same type of information in the fields consistently for all records allows you to find and sort records based on that information. If you sometimes enter the date in a field you used for other information in other records, you will not be able to use that information properly for searches, sorting, or even for some printouts (reports).

Use each field for the same class of information in all records for best results. This is essential for all database systems. The consistent use of a field for a specific piece of information allows searches and sorting to locate and arrange records accurately. Relabel the fields to make it easy to remember what should go in each field on the main screen.

Relabel the Data Entry Fields

The on-screen labels which name or describe the data entry fields exist only to remind you to consistently enter the correct type of data in the right place in every record.

You can (and should) change them to match your collection.

There is a gray "Relabel" button next to the Notes field which takes you to a screen where you can enter your own names for the fields to help you enter data in a way that makes sense for your collection.

You can also use the "Fields" tab on the Preferences panel to change the field labels.

Be careful to pick names which will help you enter the correct information in each space. Use names that fit in the space provided. This single step of relabelling the fields is the most useful in making sure your entries for every record are consistent.

NOTE! Changing the label of one or more fields does **NOT** change anything in any field. The label is only an on-screen device to help you remember what belongs in that space.

A BRIEF TOUR OF THE MAIN SCREEN

Overview

When you open the program, you are taken to the main screen where you can create and edit records. There are several features of this screen you need to understand to use the program:

The "Flip Book" at the top left corner for navigating among your records

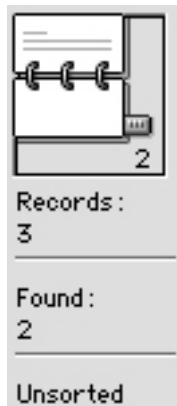
The "Menu Bar" of pull-down menus across the top of the screen, which includes the all-important VCC Actions menu

The Buttons near the left side for creating and selecting records

The Buttons at the lower right set how your records display and print.

Each of these parts is described in detail in the following sections.

Located just below the VCC coin logo at the upper right of the main screen is the name of the program and its version number and release date. Below the version number, it indicates how many records are in the currently active Found Set, and the on-screen record's location in the Found Set, along with a count of the total existing records.



Navigating Records: the flip-book

The first time you open the program a screen explains how to navigate your records using the "flip-book" at the top left corner of the screen. This allows you to navigate the current "found set" or records. To use the flip-book:

Click the upper page to go to the previous record, if any.

Click the lower page to go to the next record, if any.

Use the sliding bookmark at the right edge of the flip-book to move rapidly among the records. Drag the bookmark to the very top or bottom to go to the first or last record in the found set.

Click on the number at the lower right corner of the flip-book to highlight it, type a new number and hit the Enter key to jump to that record position in the current found set.

The number following "Records:" tells the total number of records in the program. The number following "Found:" indicates the number of records in the current found set.

The words "Sorted" or "Unsorted" indicate if the records are currently sorted based on their contents. Records are usually unsorted immediately following any change to the contents of the found set.

Menu Bar (pull-down menus)

The Menu Bar across the top of most program screen provides the choices to use the program's features. In VCC2 we have moved almost all of the actions required for using the program into the following new locations where they are easier to select and use:

1. VCC Actions pull-down menu in the Menu Bar.
2. Buttons along the left side of the screen create and select records.
3. Buttons at the lower right side of the main screen control how records appear for reports and printouts.

A few pull-down menus are still active, particularly in the Edit menu. These include Copy / Paste and related options used for moving data quickly from one place to another. A spelling menu is active but not fully supported. (Spell-checking a database full of special terms and names can be a tricky endeavor.) The Preferences item at the end of the Edit menu should not be confused with the Preferences choices built into VCC Actions or the buttons. (Leave the Preferences under the Edit menu set to VCC2's defaults.)

The "View" menu will allow you to enlarge or reduce the screen image.

Most other menu functions have been moved to the VCC Actions menu or to onscreen buttons.

The VCC Actions menu

This pull-down menu provides quick choices for:

- Selecting records in a "marked set" (see "Using the Marked Set" topic)
- Making any currently omitted records become the "Found Set". This option completely switches the current found set with any records which were not in the current found set. Selecting it twice in a row returns you to the records in the original found set. It does not change any record; it only switches which records are active in the found set. (see the Found Set topic)
- Printing the current found set of records in pages, catalogs, tags or lists (see the Printing topic)
- Perform a Backup to protect your records (see the Backup topic)
- Import records from another file (see the Upgrading topics)
- Export to a file or to text for use in other programs (see exporting topics)
- Remove text formatting from a field (see "Fonts & Text Formating")
- Set Program Preferences (see the Preferences topics)
- About this file... takes you to an information screen about VCC2
- Help! takes you to the built-in Help System

Buttons on the left

Along the left side of the main screen are buttons for creating records, changing the found set and the order in which records appear:

NEW creates new records (see "Creating and Deleting Records")

DELETE allows the deletion of just the 1 record on screen or of ALL records in the current found set (which could be one or more records, or even all records). You are allowed to pick if you want to delete 1 record, all found records, or cancel the deletion of anything after clicking the button. Deleting a record or records erases them from your computer.

OMIT, FIND, REFIN, THIS ONLY, and VIEW ALL control which records are included in the current Found Set at any time. See the "Found Set" and "Find: Searching for Records" for details of these actions.

SORT allows you to arrange the records in the Found Set in any order you want them based on any field's contents. Click the button, then click on the field containing the information on which to sort the found set. (See the Sorting Records topic for more details.)

EXIT or QUIT shuts down the program. Always shut down the program before turning off your computer. Shutting down the program properly allows it to save your most recent changes and preserve settings. Turning off the computer's power without first shutting down the program can corrupt your data file.

Buttons on the lower right

At the lower right area of the main screen are 8 buttons which control how records appear on screen and in your printouts:

CYCLE causes the records in the current found set to begin appearing one after the other much like a slide show. This provides a simple way to browse through the records. You can stop the "cycling" by clicking on the screen.

TOTALS takes you to a summary of the Costs, Sales, Profit, and Total Values for the records in the found set.

HELP takes you to the built-in Help System

PAGE takes you to a screen for printing full-page reports for individual records, one record to a page.

CATALOG allows you to pick from several designs to view and print the current found set, with or without images (if any) in one or two columns. (see the Catalogs topics for setting catalog options)

TAG takes you to the screen showing your current tag design for printing tags, and allows you to change your design. (see Tags topic)

LIST takes you to a screen for viewing or printing records as a single line per record in a column report. (see "List View" topic)

PREFS takes you a panel to set options for displaying currency, dates, changing the field names on the main screen, renumbering records, and setting up options for customized tag designs and catalogs. (see Preferences topic)

Picture Fields

The large square fields at the upper left (above the "New" button) allow you to store up to 2 images for each record. These images can be included in printed catalogs.

Read "Pictures: using digital images" to minimize problems caused by overly-large picture files or ill-chosen image formats.

Using files which are incompatible with VCC2 can crash the program.

There are 4 small buttons between the picture fields.

The first button-like area is really just information, telling you if pictures are stored in the record: No Pictures, 1 Picture, or Pictures Ready

The two "Add" buttons between the image fields automate selecting the digital image file to store in these spaces.

The magnifier button enlarges the photo on screen to twice normal size until you hit the Enter key or click the Continue button which appears to the left the first picture area during magnification.

Warning: The picture fields are able to store several file types, including some sounds, movies, and other documents from other programs. However, we caution you that VCC was not intended to store huge files in these fields, and we cannot be responsible for errors if you use them to store anything but digital image files prepared as described in the Pictures topic.

Data Entry Fields

The data entry fields are where you actually input and store your records. These fields in the center of the main screen allow you to enter up to 18 different pieces of information about each item.

The labels for many fields can be changed in the Preferences settings to names which fit your collection. (next section)

The main rule about filling in fields is to be consistent from record to record with the type of data entered in each field. Always use the same space to record to same piece of information for every record. This allows the Find and Sort functions of a database to work for you instead of against you.

Use a record to test how the data in each field displays in tags, catalogs, page view, and list view. For best results, enter your data in fields after you test how the output of each field will be printed and displayed. Then be consistent in your entries for all records.

Also read the "Data Fields" Help Topic for more useful information about how the fields enter and display information.

Relabel the Data Entry Fields

The labels which name or describe the data entry fields on the main screen are simply your reminder of what belongs in each field. They exist only to remind you to consistently enter the correct type of data in the right place in every record.

You can (and should) change them to match your collection.

There is a gray "Relabel" button next to the Notes field which takes you to a screen where you can enter your own names for the fields to help you enter data in a way that makes sense for your collection. You can also use the "Fields" tab on the Preferences panel.

Pick names which will help you enter information in each space consistently. Use names that fit in the space provided. This single step of relabelling the fields can be the most important in making sure your entries for every record are consistent.

NOTE! Changing the label of one or more fields does NOT change anything stored in any field. The label is only an on-screen device to help you remember what belongs in that space.

DATA FIELDS

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Lines 1 through 4

The first four fields below the pictures are named Line1, Line2, Line3, and Line4 in the program. They print on the preset tags and catalogs in that order, regardless of how you label or rename them.

It is recommended that you use these fields to enter the four pieces of data which you will want to appear first in the order you will want them to appear in your records. An example of how you might use them is:

Line 1 - Name or Country

Line 2 - Place or Mint

Lines 3 and 4 - Denomination or mint. It can also be useful to use one of these fields for date information if the date includes more than a numeric year. (VCC2 has a new field for simple numeric years.)

Decide what are the 4 pieces of important information you want to report first about each item, and place them in these fields (unless there are other predefined fields that better handle that information).

A faint vertical line runs across these 4 fields about 3/4 of an inch from the right edge of the fields, as a guide to the approximate length of text which will print on a single line in most tag designs.

Designs, Cat. No., and Notes

The three wide fields below Lines 1-4 are:

Designs - recommended for any description of the designs or legends.

Cat_No - recommended for catalog reference information about the item.

Notes - recommended for longer descriptions of designs or for additional notes about the history, pedigree, or whatever else you want to save about the item. The Notes field is not intended to print on most reports. The Designs field can become a problem if you enter too much information to fit on a printed tag, so extra details should be stored in Notes.

Notes can store more information than can be printed from any of the reports, up to 64,000 characters. You can store all you want here, then copy it for pasting into a word-processor program for other uses when needed. You can also export it along with other data using the Export... option in the VCC Actions menu.

Classifications

Read the "Classifications and Wantlists" topic for details of using this field. It is one of the simplest and most powerful parts of VCC.

ID No, Date Number, Grade

These fields each have some special characteristics you should understand to use them effectively.

ID No. - This is intended to be a unique number for each record. You can use the Preferences setup to set the next number to be assigned when creating new records, and also to renumber any or all of your records at any time.

Date Number - This can be any numeric value between -2000 (negative 2000) and 2100 (positive 2100), including decimal numbers. Depending on the choices in your Date Preferences, it can be displayed as a 1- to 4-digit date followed by BC or AD or other date indicators. This field can be used to accurately sort items by date.

You can use decimals (which won't appear in the resulting date) to fine-tune the sorting order of specific items which have the same date if you want them sorted in a specific order. Just add decimals to the end of the date number to force them to sort in your preferred order.

Grade - Intended for entering a Grade for your item, but can be used for other short entries, including dealer "cost code" entries.

Value, Purchase & Sale Fields

Value - This must be a numeric value between zero (0) and 99,999.99 to display properly. Do NOT enter a currency sign in this field. (Currency symbols are set under the preferences panel.) If you are recording items worth more than 99,999.99 contact Data ex Machina about a customized version of the program to meet your requirements.

The panel of fields for purchase and sale information is fairly straight forward. They allow you to record the dates of purchases and sales, the prices, and the names of the sellers and buyers. A net profit or loss is calculated automatically after a sale value has been entered.

Each time you create a new record, the date of Purchase and name of your source are entered automatically to match the record which was on screen when you clicked the "New" button to create the record. You can change these at any time.

There is a button to the left of each of the dates which can be used to change the date very quickly to the current date or to remove the date in the field.

The value, purchase, and sale price entered here are used when viewing the Totals (using the Totals button) for the current Found Set.

CREATING & DELETING RECORDS

New: Creating or Copying Records

To create a new record, you must be on the main data entry screen.

Click the "New" button directly under the left picture field. This starts the creation of a new record.

A dialog box appears allowing you to Cancel, Copy, or create a NEW record. The default choice is NEW (just hit the Enter key).

NEW creates a blank record and takes you to the first empty field to enter information. New was set as the default because most collectors are entering different coin description for each record.

Copy creates an exact duplicate of the record which was on screen when you clicked the NEW button. The only difference between the original and the new copy is the record ID Number.

Copy offers special advantages for users who have many similar items in their collections. To use Copy, locate a coin with much of the same information, then use the New button, then select COPY. Make any changes to the new record without having to reenter information which was the same. Copy is also ideal for dealers who purchase a group of identical or similar coins and want to produce tags for the group very quickly rather than printing one tag repeatedly.

Auto-Entries in a New Record

Each time you create a record, the coin Classification of the record which was last on screen will be entered automatically for the new record. You can change it after the new record is created. If you are entering several coins of the same class, make sure the first one you create has the proper class entered before creating the rest so you will not need to change them later.

Each time you create a record, the program assigns a serial number which is next in sequence according to a hidden counter in the program. You can change this number at will for any record, or reset the counter in the Number Preferences panel.

Creating a record automatically enters the same Purchase date and the same name of the seller from the record which was on screen when you clicked the New button. This provides a default date which you can change to suit your needs.

Editing Records

The main screen provides fields in which to enter the information which will be used in printouts.

Move among the fields by using the TAB key on your keyboard or by using the mouse to click in a different field. The tab key moves you among the fields in a set order which is easy to use for creating records, but it is faster to click on a field you want if you want to edit only that part of the record.

To close all fields without clicking a button, click outside of a field or use the Enter key that actually closes fields (see Warning below). Clicking on the program logo is a safe place to click to exit all fields without risk of hitting a button. Each time you leave a field, that field is 'closed,' and your computer writes the changed information in it to your hard disk. This is an automated SAVE process in VCC.

Warning: Many keyboards have one or more ENTER keys, but they do not necessarily 'enter' data. Some ENTER keys behave as a typewriter's carriage return, adding an empty text line at the end of your field. This blank line may mess up your printing of tags and other pages for every record in which you enter a 'return.' Test your ENTER keys and find out which one 'closes' your fields rather than adding a blank line. The sooner you learn what each of them does, the fewer incorrect printouts you will produce. On most systems with two ENTER keys, the one nearest the letter keys creates a new line, while the one nearest the number keypad actually closes the active field. Test it out and use the correct key.

Delete: Permanently Remove Records

The Delete button (just below the New button) is used to delete a record, a group of records, or All existing records. Clicking the button starts the process, but you must confirm your choices before anything happens. Once you have confirmed your selection, the deletion is permanent. There is no "undo" for deletes.

When you click the Delete button, you will be asked to choose what to delete:

- Delete 1: permanently deletes only the record which was on screen when you clicked the Delete button
- Delete All: permanently deletes all records which were in the current found set. You need to be very aware of which records are in the current "found set" before you select the Delete All option. If all records in the program are active in the found set, this option will permanently remove every existing record. If more than one record is in the current found set, the entire found set will be permanently deleted. There is NO UNDO after a deletion. Whatever you deleted is gone.
- Cancel: This is the default option if you hit the Enter key. Nothing happens. You have not deleted anything.

Omit does not delete a record

The Omit button simply omits the record which was on screen from the found set. The record remains in the program ready to use any time you include it in the found set.

Omit is always a temporary action, as opposed to Delete, which is a permanent action which removes the record from the program and from your computer's memory.

CLASSICATIONS & WANTLISTS

Using Classifications

This is one of the most powerful features of VCC. It allows you to assign a group name (classification) to any record or group of records. You can then perform searches on the classification group to isolate that group of records at any time.

This allows tracking any collections which you consider to be separate entities in the same file. You can include or exclude any group or groups at any given time by making the Classification information part of your search requests. This eliminates any need for keeping different collections in different files.

Each time you create a record, it is assigned the Classification of the record which was on screen when you clicked the New button. You can change it at any time.

A list of all classifications used in your existing records pops up as a list to pick from each time you enter the Classification field. You can assign a new classification that is not yet in that list by clicking the "+" button at the left end of the classification field and typing it into the dialog box which appears.

Keeping a Wantlist

VCC allows you to store a Wantlist in the program and then move acquired items from the Wantlist to the classification of choice when you obtain the item.

Simply enter records of things you want to acquire and give them the classification name: Wantlist

You can perform a Find/search for classification "wantlist" and print the list to take with you to shows or to send to your favorite dealer.

When you acquire the item, reassign that record to its new category. You do not have to recreate the record, just fill in any blank fields for which you have new information, and you are done. Your collection records are updated, and your wantlist is updated because changing the classification means it won't show up in the Wantlist search next time.

Change classification of found set

The VCC Actions menu in the Help System has a menu item "Change Classification of Found Set" which does the following:

It takes the Classification of the record you were last viewing in VCC and changes the classification of EVERY record in the Found Set to that classification.

To properly use this action, first perform the following steps in the VCC file:

1. Isolate EXACTLY those records you want to change as the Found Set.
2. Go to the first record in that found set (use the flip-book).
3. On the first record, use the "+" button to enter the exact Classification you want to set for the entire Found Set.
4. Return to this Topic and Section to run the VCC Actions menu item "Change Classification of Found Set." You will be asked to confirm that you want to make the change. If you give the OK, a "Replace" dialog box will appear preset to change the Classification when you click the "Replace" button. Just click the "Replace" button to change the classification of all records in the Found Set at once.

TAGS

About tag choices

VCC offers 4 preset tag designs and one which can be customized by your selections in the "Tags" portion of the Preferences panel.

All tags are designed as 2x2-inch size for coin-flips or tray inserts. You can print up to twenty 2x2 tags (4 across by 5 down) on a 8.5x11-inch sheet. (Print tags on lightweight card stock and cut the sheets on a papercutter.)

There are 4 pre-set tags and one tag design which can be customized extensively from the Tag panel of the Preferences screen. (Use the "Prefs." button on the main screen or "Set Program Preferences..." from the VCC Actions menu.)

To use one of the preset designs, just click on the design you want in the Tags panel of the preferences settings. That design will be your default design for printing tags until you select a different design. Only one tag design can be selected at a time for any print job, regardless of the number of records to be printed.

Setting up the Custom tag

The Custom Tag design screen is reached in the Preferences panels by clicking on the Tags panel, and, if the preset tags are showing, clicking on the Custom button.

This screen shows your current record as the sample in the left of the screen, next to a position key which indicates where your selected fields can be placed.

The Field Selections column provides a series of fields for identifying which field's contents you want to have appear in the corresponding position. A key to the Field names appears to the right of the Field Selections column.

Select the name of the field you want to appear in the Fields Selection column for the corresponding location on the tag. The data from your current record will appear in the "Your Current Record" sample tag.

You can also set a message to appear as one of the fields. The area below the position map allows you to create your message text. Assign the "Tag_Message" to a field location to have your message appear on all tags. Click directly on the sample tag area to update your message text after entering it.

Some position fields must be left blank for any tag to look good. Many of the positions would overlap if used together.

Click the "OK Use This" button when you have a design you want to use.

Printing tags in other sizes

If you want to print tags in a size other than 2x2, select a size setting other than 100% (or Actual Size) during the print setup screen which appears at the beginning of the Print/ Preview when printing your tags. Your printer must support scaling of print jobs to different sizes for this option to appear, but most printers do.

You can set it to larger sizes, but printing multiple tags on a page may not all fit at larger sizes.

Most people use 2x2 tags, but you may need smaller tags for special trays or small flips.

Regardless of the size you select, if you have 4 or more records in the Found Set, the tags will print 4 across in as many rows down as will fit on the page at the magnification or reduction you set in the print dialog box.

CATALOGS

About catalog choices

VCC offers two preset catalog designs and one which can be customized according to your selections in the "Catalog" tab of the Preferences panel. (Use the "Prefs." button on the main screen or "Set Program Preferences..." from the VCC Actions menu.)

All catalogs are designed to print in portrait/tall orientation on 8.5x11 paper.

Your option of which design to use appears each time you click the Catalog button or select a catalog print job from the VCC Actions menu.

Single column catalogs

There are two single-column catalogs with fixed designs -- with or without pictures. The only changeable setting for a single-column catalog is whether or not to include the contents of the Notes field. (Go to the catalog view using the Catalog button to set this choice.)

The catalog WITHOUT pictures prints the catalog text the full width of the sheet, with as many records on a page as fit, depending on the length of the entered information for each record.

The catalog WITH pictures prints the catalog text in a narrower column to the left, with an area to the right for any images to appear. It prints as many records as will fit on the page depending on the amount of information entered in each record. However, it uses as much space as required for any images, which may be larger than the text area. This may create an area of white space below the text for some records. If there is no picture in some records, the text remains in the narrow text area, leaving a blank area where the pictures would have displayed.

The 2-column catalog

The 2-column catalog always includes any pictures stored in the record. It prints 2 columns wide on the page, showing as many records in a column as will fit, depending on the amount of information entered in the record, the selection of fields to include in the text, and whether or not there are images (as well as those images' size).

Typically, a column will have 4 to 6 records with images (depending on image size) with 8 to 12 illustrated records on a 2-column page.

If there are images for some records, but not for others, empty image areas shrink when previewing and printing, maximizing the number of records which fit and improving the spacing on the page.

You control how long the catalog text is by the amount of information you enter into each record within the fields you include in the catalog contents. (see Setting up the 2-column catalog)

Setting up the 2-column catalog

To change the contents of the 2-column catalog's text, go to the "Catalog" tab of the Preferences Panel. There you can select the fields to appear in the catalog text in the order you want them, and set which punctuation or extra spacing you want to appear following each field's contents within the catalog text.

Select only field names which appear in the popup menus in the "Contents" column of choices. A "key" to the fields appears at the left of the panel. The most-recently used record appears in the "Sample" area below your selections, showing how that record will appear based on your current setup.

Keep in mind that your entries in the actual data fields of each record will affect the spacing of the catalog text for individual records (not just the choices you make in the Catalog preference panel). If a specific record seems poorly spaced, edit that record's data on the main screen to adjust the spacing of the individual record.

Your preference panel setting for the catalog controls how EVERY record in the 2-column catalog displays until you change the settings. You cannot set different preferences for different records. Your preference entries affect the 2-column catalog design as a whole.

If you become dissatisfied with the results of your settings, you can always click the "Catalog Defaults" button at the lower left of the Catalog panel to reset the design as it was when VCC2 shipped.

FIND: SEARCHING FOR RECORDS

The "Find" button

The ability to locate, view, edit, and print precisely the group of records you want in the order you want them at any time makes the Virtual Coin Cabinet a powerful tool. Learning to find exactly the record(s) you want is a key step in using the Virtual Coin Cabinet, so we will discuss it in some depth.

All Finds (searches) begin by clicking the FIND button on the main screen. This takes you into "Find" mode to enter your search request.

The most common and simplest type of Find is to locate a specific record. You simply type information which will match that record you want in the field where that information is stored. Then click the Find button or hit the Enter key on your keyboard. Any record(s) matching the information you entered will be located and displayed.

The Enter key and the Find button behave differently:

- Enter: shows you the matching record(s) on the main screen
- Find: offers you a choice of viewing the main screen or the List View screen to examine the records if more than one match is found

The flip-book at the upper left corner of the main screen tells you how many records were found matching your request.

Keep Your Searches Simple

The most common mistake made when performing a search is to enter too much detail into the search fields.

Enter only enough detail to allow the program to find the record you want without a lot of extra records. You can then view the List of found records, click on the one you want, and return to the main screen to view it in detail.

For Example, if you have a thousand world coins in VCC and want to locate a single French 5-franc of 1956, you COULD enter the following on a single screen:

In your Country field: France

In your Denomination field: 5 Francs

In your Date field: 1956

You then hit the Find button and get a message nothing was found that matched!

Instead, you should consider entering just the date and country. When you click the Find button you now get a List View of coins of different denominations. Click on the 5 Franc coin then click the "Go to Main Screen" button.

Why did the second search with LESS detail work, actually finding MORE records, while the more detailed request found nothing? Probably because the actual data in the denomination field was "5-franc" so your request for "Francs" did not match (with the "S" at the end of the word).

The less information you specify in a search, the more likely you are to get a match! Always keep your requests as simple as possible when trying to locate a specific record, then locate that record in the List to view it. Make your request more specific if the search results find more than is convenient to browse (or if you need a precise group of records for a printout). You can use the Omit button to remove a few unwanted items from a found set.

When Nothing is Found

Sometimes your search finds nothing (if no record matched your request). This will be due to one of these two reasons:

1. The record you wanted really does not exist.
2. Your "Find" request includes a piece of data which is different than what was stored in the record.

If the record does not exist, you can decide to create it. If, however, you know it should exist, simplify your search entry, as described in the previous section.

Remember these rules about searches:

- Spelling errors in searches will not match records which are accurate. Correct spelling in searches may not match inaccurately entered records.
- The more detail you enter in single Find request, the fewer possible matches will result.
- If your original search found nothing but you know the record exists, simplify your search data and view a List of results to isolate the specific record.

Refind: when you found too much

Sometimes your search will find a great deal more than you wanted - so many records that you don't want to look through them all for what you really want. Narrowing the search requires **ADDING** details to the request so that fewer items will match.

Click the Refind button, taking you back to Find mode with your previous request showing:

Modify your request by adding more details in other fields to help isolate the exact item(s) you want. Add details which will match records you want but not match records you want to avoid, or...

Add an 'omitted request' that removes items which you did not want to find. (see the next section on the OMIT button)

Omit: using it in a search

Adding an 'omitted request' removes items which you do not want to find.

Omit can be used two ways during a search:

1. You can use Omit on a single request to produce a found set of everything which **DOES NOT** match the data in your search.
 - Click Find, and enter the data you want to avoid. (i.e., you want to see everything except "France" so you enter "France" in the country name field)
 - Click the Omit button, then click the Find button.

You will find every record in the program that does not have "France" in the country field.

2. You can use Omit with multiple Find requests for more complex searches. (see next section for more on multiple requests)
 - Click Find, and enter data to Find, even though it matches more records than you want.
 - Click the New button while still in Find mode, and you will be asked if you want to create an additional Find screen, click the "Find" option in that dialog.
 - On this new blank Find screen, enter the data you want to omit from the results of the original request.
 - Click the Omit button, and then Click the Find button to complete the search.

Here's an example of what happens when you follow the steps above:

You create a search for coins dated 1956, but you don't want to include France, so you create an additional search screen, enter France, and click Omit. The results will be everything which had 1956 in the date, except France, which was completely omitted regardless of date.

Be sure to read the section "Order Matters in Omit Finds."

Multiple Requests

Using Multiple Requests in Find mode allows you to generate results which can be very useful when you want to create a catalog, report, or printout of a group which may not match a single piece of information. This is possible as long as you can define the criteria you want to use for defining the groups.

First you click the Find button to enter Find mode for a search. Enter the first piece of information you want to match.

Click the New button while still in Find mode to create an additional Find request. Do this as many times as necessary to enter each of the different requests.

Click the Find button or Enter key when all requests are complete, and you will get results including every record which matched any one of the Find screens you entered.

You can combine the Omit button described in the previous section with as many multiple requests as necessary. Be sure to read the section "Order Matters in Omit Finds."

Order Matters in Omit Finds

When using the Omit button during multiple Find requests, the order in which you create Find screens is critical. Find requests are processed in the order they are created, so Omits are not necessarily handled as expected if you give no thought to their order. Here are a few examples so you will understand how requests are processed in order:

1. You enter these Find screens:

Find: France

Find (Omit): 1956

Find: Switzerland

The results WILL include France (except 1956) and all Swiss (including 1956) because you ADDED all of Switzerland after omitting 1956 from France.

2. If however, you enter these Find screens

Find: France

Find: Switzerland

Find (Omit): 1956

The results will include all French and Swiss items except 1956. No 1956 items will be included for either country.

3. And now for a nasty surprise! What if you enter these Find screens:

Find (Omit):1956

Find: Switzerland

Find: France

The results will include all French and all Swiss including 1956 for both, because you added all France and all Switzerland AFTER omitting 1956. HOWEVER, it will also include EVERY other record in the system which is NOT 1956! It interpreted the Omit in the FIRST SCREEN as a request for everything which was NOT 1956, then it added ALL of France and ALL of Switzerland (when the only things left to add were their 1956 records).

Caution: anytime you begin a Find request with an Omit on the first screen, it treats it as a positive request to Find everything which does not match the omitted data.

Using the search Symbols

When you are in find mode, a new pop-up menu appears below the navigation "flip-book" called Symbols. To use the symbol menu, click in the field you in which you want to enter a search symbol, then hold down the symbol menu.

A list will appear of the symbols and their brief explanations. Select one from the list and it is instantly placed in the field in which you had clicked.

These symbols allow you to improve your search results by modifying how the search is performed on the entered request. By inserting the "less than" and "greater than" symbols, you can locate groups of items which meet the condition of being greater or less than the value you entered. This is especially powerful when searching on dates and values.

Each symbol has it own brief description to help you figure out when to use it. Experiment with them, entering the symbols before typing in the data you want to use as a "limiter" for the search. You cannot break or change any data by performing a Find, so experiment away.

Using INSERT... in a search

The INSERT pull-down menu offers a valuable tool for searching. While in Find mode, click inside a field and then select the INSERT pull-down menu to use the Insert From Index option.

This displays a popup list of all EXISTING data in the field. Inserting data from the index into the search field guarantees a match because you entered data known to exist.

This is particularly valuable in avoiding problems caused by typographical errors in either the data itself, or in your search request.

It can also be a good way of checking for the existence of specific records if a search failed when you expected to find a record but did not locate it in a search.

THE FOUND SET

"Found Set" explained

The "Found Set" is those records which are currently available for any actions to be performed. In other words, only the Found Set can be printed, edited, viewed, renumbered, deleted, or have any action affect them.

The question is, "which records are included in the Found Set at any given moment?" That information is provided on screen in two places:

1. The "flip-book" area in the upper left corner of the screen. It will either have a "Found:" count indicating how many of the existing records are among the Found Set, or it will not show a "Found:" number, in which case ALL existing records are active in the Found Set.
2. On the main screen, just below the VCC logo picture, the last 2 lines of text tell which record you are on, how many records with it are "Found" (the count of the Found Set), out of how many total records exist in the program.

Knowing which records are in the Found Set is important any time you perform an action, because ONLY the records in the Found Set will be included in the results of that action, be it to Sort records, View a List, Print tags, or Delete records.

Each time you start the program, ALL records are included in the Found Set until you perform an action which changes the Found Set.

Changing the Found Set

Each time you start the program, all records are included in the Found Set. You change the Found Set using buttons and menu items. The following changes to the Found Set are done with the buttons along the left side of the screen:

- Create a New record. New records are included in the Found Set until the Found Set is changed in some other way.
- Delete one or more records. Caution: Delete completely and permanently removes the deleted record(s) from the program.

Unless you want to erase the record from your computer's memory, use Omit to remove a record from the Found Set.

- Click the Omit button while viewing any group of records. The record which was on screen is immediately removed from the Found Set. (It's not gone forever, just omitted from the current Found Set.)
- Perform a Find. The results become the Found Set, of course.
- Click the "This Only" button to make the record which was on screen the ONLY record in the Found Set.
- Click "View All" to bring EVERY record in the program into the Found Set.

There are two additional ways to change the Found Set. They are the first two menu items under VCC Actions:

1. "Use the Marked Set..." allows you to control which records are active based on choices you can make about a marked set of records. (See the Help Topic on using the marked set for details.)
2. "Show currently omitted records" instantly switches all records which were IN the Found Set out of the Found Set. All records which were NOT IN the Found Set become the new Found Set.

Selecting this menu action again will switch them back. You can jump back and forth between 2 sets this way, but remember that each change takes you to ALL records which were not included in the other set.

If you select it while ALL records are in the Found Set, you will be told that there are no omitted records, and you will be left with all records still in the Found Set.

USING THE MARKED SET

What is the Marked Set?

"Use the Marked Set..." is the first VCC Action menu item.

The "Marked Set" is those records which have been assigned a code in a hidden field to identify them as records you particularly want to keep track of to use in a special way, such as when you are preparing a catalog of a specific portion of your records.

The reason to mark a set is simple: You can recall this set of records at any time from this menu item no matter where you are in the program or what records you were viewing. You do not have to perform a Find/Search with all the required entries to locate them, and they will even be arranged in the same order they were when you marked the set.

This is a powerful feature which lets you keep track of this special group of records for any reason.

You select Use the Marked Set... in the VCC Actions menu to do anything involving a marked set. This will take you to a screen where you can create a New Set (using the current Found Set), Find and display the existing marked set, Add or Remove a record to or from the marked set, or even add all of the current Found Set to an existing Marked Set.

Each of these operations is explained in the following sections.

You will not change, damage or destroy any record or its contents by working with the Marked Set. Even the "Remove" button simply removes an invisible marker that tracks if a record is in the Marked Set. The record still remains in the program exactly as it was before you did anything to the Marked Set.

New Set button

The "New Set" button marks the records in your current Found Set as the new marked set.

The Marked Set feature of this program is quite powerful for helping you track one specific set of records - whichever group of records you most recently marked as the set to track. There can be only one marked set at a time.

Changing a Marked Set does not create, delete or change any existing record. The records all continue to exist exactly as they were. All you have changed is which records will be on screen when you activate the Marked Set. The Marked Set will be the group most recently marked by you using the options on the "Using the Marked Set" screen.

Find Set button

The "Find Set" button makes the records of any existing Marked Set appear as the current Found Set, ready for you to view, edit, sort, and/or print.

The Find Set button does not create or delete any records. It simply finds the Marked Set for you.

Add This button

The "Add This" button makes the record you last viewed on screen part of any existing Marked Set. All records which were previously part of the Marked Set are still part of the Marked Set. This record has just been marked as well.

If the record you are trying to add to the Marked Set was already part of the Marked Set, you will get a message telling you that record is already marked.

You will need to click the Find Set button if you want to view the complete Marked Set. Adding a record to the Marked Set does not activate/find the Marked Set, it just marks that record.

Remove button

The "Remove" button takes the record you last viewed out of the Marked Set. All other records which were previously part of the Marked Set are still part of the Marked Set. This one has just been UNmarked.

If the record you are trying to Remove from the Marked Set was NOT already part of the Marked Set, the program will tell you that, then wait for you to do something else.

You will need to use the Find Set button if you want to activate the remaining Marked Set after using the Remove button on a single record. The Remove button just unmarks the record, it does not change the Found Set on screen at the time.

Add These button

The "Add These" button makes the entire Found Set of records you are working with part of any existing Marked Set. All records which were previously part of the Marked Set are still in the Marked Set. The entire Found Set has been marked as well.

You will still need to use the Find Set button to recall the full Marked Set after adding records to it. The Add These button does not automatically change the Found Set.

Done button

Click the "Done" button at any time to leave the Marked Set screen and return to the main screen and the current record(s).

SHOW CURRENTLY OMITTED RECORDS

Switching records in the Found Set

"Show currently omitted records" instantly switches all records which were IN the Found Set out of the Found Set, and all records which were NOT IN the Found Set become the new Found Set.

Selecting this menu action again will switch them back. You can jump back and forth between 2 sets this way, but remember that each change takes you to ALL records which were not included in the other set.

If you select it while ALL records are in the Found Set, you will be told that there are no omitted records, and you will be left with all records still in the Found Set.

SORTING RECORDS

Ordering the Found Set

You can Sort the records in the Found Set at any time so they are in the order you want them for viewing or printing. (See "The Found Set" and "Find: searching for records" topics for details on selecting exactly the group of records you want to sort.) Unsorted records appear in the order in which the records were created!

Sorting begins by clicking the "Sort" button (just above the Exit / Quit button) near the lower left on the main screen.

Sorting arranges the records in the Found Set based on the contents of one or more information fields in the records. For example, you could sort them based on Country, Denomination, and/or Date.

Sorting is essential for some types of reports if you want the information to be quickly useful, such as a list printout of items by date. If they are sorted by date, they will appear in the date order regardless of the order in which you created them.

Sorting records in this program can be accomplished two ways: either a simple sort on a single field of your choice, or a complex sorting order using any combination(s) of fields.

Single field Sorts are adequate for many tasks, but the more complex sorts can give you enough control for printing catalogs of your entire collection in a meaningful order.

Sorting on a single field

Sorting records on a single field will often get them into a useable order. To do this, click the Sort button near the lower left of the main screen.

The Sort button takes you to a screen which contains most of the same fields as the main screen, but not all of them.

To sort your Found Set of records on a single field, just click on that field on this sorting screen. The records are instantly sorted on that field, and you will be asked if you want to view them in a List or on the main screen. You are taken to the screen of your choice with the records ordered based on the contents of the field you clicked.

Now that they are sorted, you can print any list or catalog of these records and have them appear in the desired order, sorted on the contents of the field you selected.

Sorting on multiple fields

While sorting records on a single field will often get them into a useable order, there are times when a more precise arrangement is needed.

For example, if you sorted all of your coins on the country name entered in a field, all of the coins for any single country would be grouped together, but within each country group, the records would still appear in the order in which they had been created. You would probably prefer that they were arranged by denomination and date, or by some other additional criteria.

To sort records by multiple field values, you need to build your own sorting order.

1. Click the Sort button on the main screen
2. On the sorting screen, click on the large button at the left which says "Click Here for a Custom Sort Order"

This takes you to the "Sort Records" dialog box where you can build a custom sort using any field values in any order.

Start by clicking the Clear All button so there are no fields listed on the right. Next select the field on which you want to first group records. In the example described above, this would be the field where your country name was stored. Let's assume that is Line1 (the first field in the center of the main screen).

Double click on Line1 so that it appears at the top of the right "Sort Order" area. You can select it on the right and use the buttons at the bottom of the screen to change the order in which its values are sorted, but probably you want to keep them in "Ascending order" (A before B before C, etc.).

So far we have accomplished only what clicking on the first field on the sorting screen would have done - sort by country name. Now we want to add more to the Sorting Order.

If you want items within each country group to be arranged by Denomination, select the field name where you entered the Denominations (let's assume that's Line4 for now). So you now double-click on Line4 on the list at the left to move it into the right panel below Line1.

If you also want each record in the denominations group to be in date order, you would next move the field for the date from the left panel to the right.

The right panel of the Sorting Order might look like this:

- Line1
- Line3
- Date_Number

If you now click the SORT button in the center of the dialog box, your records will be sorted so that all records for a country are together. Within a country group, all records of the same denomination will be together with the oldest dates before the newer dates within each denomination subgroup.

You can view the sorted records in a List or on the main screen. From there you can choose to print them in Lists or Catalogs while sorted.

Sorting Dates & Numbers

When sorting on numbers, only these fields are true number fields which will sort predictably as numbers: ID No., Date Number, Value, Price Paid (Paid) , Sale Price, and Profit.

Text fields containing numerals will still sort as text. If the dates 323 BC, 900 AD, and 2003 are entered in a text field and sorted, they will be rearranged: 2003, 323 BC, 900 AD. This is because 2 comes before 3, which comes before 9. If, instead, you enter that date information in the "Date Number" field (2003, 900, and -323) and sort it, it will be arranged: 323 BC, 900, and 2003.

Dates of Purchase of the Entry Date and Sale Date are "whole date fields" which must include day and month information as well as the year. They sort accurately as dates, but are not intended to keep track of dates of coin issues, which are usually years or ranges of years.

PRINTING

Printouts: your choice of reports

VCC lets you print your records in numerous ways: lists, catalogs, tags, and a full-page views.

Page: prints 1 full page for each record. It includes nearly every possible field for each record, including an area showing purchase and sale details, as well as photos (if any). If you are printing the "Page" view for 100 records, it will use 100 sheets of paper.

1-Column Catalog: there are two single-column catalog designs, with the text running the full width of a letter-size sheet. One has no pictures and the other includes photos. The major fields from each record are printed across the page, with as many records to a page as fit. The length of a printout in any catalog design depends on the amount of data entered into the fields, and if there are images. The Preview function shows how many pages a catalog takes to print. (see the Catalog topic for additional details)

2-Column Catalog: prints 2 narrow columns to each sheet, with the records' text below any image. You have a great deal of choice in setting up the order in which information appears in this printout. The Preview function will show how many pages a catalog will take to print. You must do the catalog setup for this design BEFORE printing. (see the Catalog topic for setup details)

Tags: these are designed as flip or tray inserts in 2x2-inch size. Up to 20 2x2 tags (4 across by 5 down) print on a 8.5x11-inch sheet. There are 5 basic tag designs, one of which allows custom setup. See other Tag topics for details.

List: allows a single line of information to be printed for each record, including as many fields as you set to fit to the paper width. You can print lists either "wide/landscape" or "tall/portrait" on the paper. Tall allows more records per page than Wide but fewer fields per record will fit across. Depending on your printer drivers and hardware, the tall paper orientations allows roughly 50 records per page, while the wide orientation will allow roughly 35 records. (Your printer may vary from these estimates.) You must use the List button to adjust your List for the width and order of the columns before starting the Print command.

Preview / Print options

Preview does NOT allow you to change settings for lists and catalogs. Use the buttons at the lower right of the main screen to go to the design you want to adjust BEFORE using any print menus.

Each time you select a print item from the VCC Actions menu, or click on the Preview/ Print button on a printable screen, you are asked to make several choices.

If the printout you have selected includes a Title, you will be allowed to change the text used as the title for that printout. This allows you to name catalogs and list printouts with a title for that specific printing. The title will appear on the printed page.

Next you will be asked to verify the paper setting to be used by the printer. This includes selecting the size of paper and its orientation (tall or wide). ALL printouts have been designed for 8.5x11-inch paper in tall/portrait orientation. The only printout where you should attempt to vary this is the List view. (Feel free to experiment, especially if your printer supports larger paper sizes.)

After verifying the size and orientation of your paper, VCC2 previews your printout. Preview processes the file and shows you the results on screen.

If you are previewing a print which includes pictures, preview must process the images before it can show you the screen. The more records and the more images, the longer the preview may take to appear. If, however, you find that the preview is taking a minute or more to show you the first page, it is extremely likely that the slowness is caused by unnecessarily large image files being stored in your records. See the topics on digital images for help in avoiding this problem.

Preview shows how many pages the printout will take. Use the navigation flip-book to see each page. After previewing, you are given a choice to print immediately.

Printing Tags: special features

VCC offers 4 preset tag designs and one which can be customized. All tags are designed as 2x2-inch size for coin-flips or tray inserts. Twenty 2x2 tags (4 across by 5 down) print on a 8.5x11-inch sheet.

If you want to print tags in a size other than 2x2, select a size setting other than 100% (or Actual Size) in the print setup screen which appears at the beginning of the Print/ Preview for the tags. Your printer must support "scaling" print jobs to different sizes for this option to appear. Most printers support "scaling."

See the Tags and the Preferences topics for details on selecting a tag design and using the Custom tag features.

Lists: adjusting for printing

The List view is new to this version of VCC. You can achieve almost any results you might want in List view. Use the "List" button on the main screen to go to the List view and make adjustments BEFORE printing the List.

List view provides one line for each record with a column for each field. This is more fields than will print across any standard page, even if you set the printout orientation to wide/ landscape. You must adjust it to show the fields you want in the correct order and width for each field.

Select the fields to go into the printable area by dragging in the MIDDLE of the column heading you want to move. Drag the header to the left or right PAST other column headings using your computer mouse. They will reorganize in the order you place them, allowing you to select the columns you want in the order you want them for the printable area.

To adjust the width of a column, DRAG on its heading's right-most EDGE to change its width using your computer mouse.

Check the printout in Preview and make any additional adjustments to the column placement or widths before printing. You can choose for the page to print either wide (for more columns) or tall (for more records per page).

Four buttons across the top of the List view screen provide information, sorting, preview/printing and "Go to Main Screen." Red lines at either end of the "Go to Main Screen" button show the approximate right margin of a printed page for portrait or landscape oriented paper.

A button at the bottom turns on or off a running total of the Values for the records on the printout. If the button says "Hide Total at bottom of pages" it will print the total. If it says "Show Total at bottom of pages" it will NOT print the total. This total only shows during the Preview and on the printout, not while viewing the normal screen.

Blank pages in OS X

As of July 2003, there was one known print issue for OSX:

Selecting a range of pages for printing in the OS X print setup dialog (rather than printing all pages for the current records) could cause pages to come out blank on some printers!

To avoid this problem, perform a Find to locate only those records you want to print. Then print all pages for those records, rather than selecting a page range.

Other Printing Problems

If you have other problems printing, please see the documentation for your printer. VCC works with virtually all printers, but printer drivers are a common source of errors in computer systems. VCC software relies on the installed printer software for generating Previews and printouts. With hundreds of printer drivers in use, some driver errors happen.

Be sure you are using the latest printer driver files available for your printer and system software. Visit the website of your printer's manufacturer to locate updated drivers and printer software.

Unnecessarily large image files stored in your picture fields can cause prints to take exceeding long times, or even fail to print because your printer balks at processing the quantity of image information on a printed page. See the topics on digital images to learn how to save image files for placing them in VCC so they will behave properly.

Similarly, if certain images fail to print, the problem is probably with the image's file format. Some digital image formats are intended primarily for on-screen viewing, not printouts. Some require browser programs to use them fully. The wide variety of default formats saved by digital cameras and scanners are not all intended for use in this type of program. See the sections on digital images to learn how to prepare images for best results.

Fonts & Text Formatting

Special Fonts

VCC is preset to display and print almost everything in the Times or Times New Roman fonts.*

Every Windows and Macintosh computer ships with fonts which allow special characters, including Greek letters.

While you are on the main screen for creating and editing records, you can use your mouse or pointing device to select text in a field by highlighting it. Once it is highlighted, features in the Format pull-down menu become available, including selecting different fonts, styles of fonts (depending on the active fonts and your system), sizes of type and line spacings.

Some Windows computers require you to "activate" fonts from the Format pull-down menu before they appear in your font list. You do NOT need to buy and install new fonts for Greek symbols and characters. Just activate them from the Format menu.

WARNING! Be careful NOT to make the Greek Symbols fonts your computer's default font when activating it! We've seen that done, and it can be VERY difficult to fix if you don't read Greek fluently.

* Windows computers use Times New Roman, and Macintosh computers use Times. These fonts are part of your original system software. Fonts are not part of VCC. If Times is missing from your computer, it has been removed, and needs to be replaced (or activated on Windows), otherwise your computer will substitute some other font, and we cannot answer for the results.

Type Formatting Options

You can use your mouse or pointing device to select text in a field by highlighting it. Once it is highlighted, features in the Format pull-down menu become available, including selecting different fonts, styles of fonts (depending on your fonts and your system), sizes of type and line spacings.

When you apply font changes you are creating what is known as 'character level formatting' which is then used most places in the program where the altered text may appear. If you make the text too large, your tags may run out of room for the information you entered. If you make text too small, it may look less than ideal in catalogs or be difficult to read on screen.

Applying character level formatting to some text within a field, but not all of it, can cause the unformatted text in the rest of that field to change to any other font your computer may substitute as a default - not necessarily the font we originally assigned to the field, nor one you would want to see there.

You must apply character-level formatting to EVERYTHING in that field (for that one specific record) to avoid having your computer guess which font to use for the unformatted text. You can format part of the text one way and part another, but it is unwise to leave any part of the field contents unformatted if you format any part of a field for that record.

VCC has preset font sizes which are appropriate to the printouts and screens. If you apply character level formatting, it overrides these program defaults, and you may not like the results.

Experiment with a sample record to see if your formatting options give you pleasing printouts, then use formats you have tested and like (or don't format text). There is no reason to format anything yourself unless you need font characters from a special font.

Removing Text Formatting

The Virtual Coin Cabinet has preset font sizes which are appropriate to the printouts and screens. If you apply character level formatting, it overrides these program defaults, and you may not like the results.

If you have formatted some text and now find you don't want it formatted, VCC2 offers a fast way to remove formatting while preserving the data:

1. Go to the main screen for the record you want to fix,
2. Click in the field which you want to clean of its formatting,
3. Select "Remove text formatting from field" in the VCC Actions menu.

You can tab from field to field and select this option while in each field that needs "cleaning." Only the record visible on the main screen is affected.

Disappearing text formatting

Some screens and printouts in VCC2 show information from record fields based on your choices of what to display in what order, rather than always showing the same fields in the same order. Text formatting and special fonts usually do NOT retain any custom formats on those screens because of the way the program must manipulate the code for the fields' contents to display these user-specified screen designs.

These following printouts are likely to ignore your special font settings and show the field contents as regular text:

- Custom Tag (although all PRESET tags WILL show formatting.)
- 2-Column Catalog
- Notes field in all catalogs

But I must have it my way!

Of course you do, and we'll be glad to do it for you. However, if you want to use a custom design and still have your font of choice, that requires custom programming. The design you want must be "hard coded" into the program instead of being optional settings.

Custom programming of specific printouts and screens is available from Data ex Machina. Contact us for a price quote for your design. Current contact information is on our website:

<http://www.dataxm.com>

Custom programming is not part of technical support.

Please read the Technical Support and Customizing topics.

PICTURES: USING DIGITAL IMAGES

Adding images to your records

VCC lets you place up to 2 images in each record, using the picture fields at the top left of the main screen. To place photos in these fields, click the Add button which points to the field where you want to place the image.

You must have a digital image file available in your computer files to use as the image source for the picture. Clicking an Add button opens the "Insert Picture" screen. You then locate the saved digital image file on your computer, select (highlight) it and click the Open button to place it.

Set the "Show" file type area of the section box to "All Available" to see all readable file formats.

The option to "Store only a reference to the file" seems ideal for saving space, but it will cause you major trouble if you ever move or rename any image file used in the Virtual Coin Cabinet or any file that is part of VCC. Deselect (uncheck) that choice at the bottom of the selection box, and store the actual image in your data file. That way it is always be part of the VCC file for viewing and printing., and it will be kept in any backup file you save.

To remove a image from a picture field, click inside the picture field and hit the delete/backspace key. Adding a picture where one is already in place removes the previous picture.

WARNING! If your selected image takes more than a couple of seconds to appear after you select it with the Add button, it has probably not been properly prepared for use in VCC. (see Preparing image files)

DISCLAIMER: These image fields are 'containers' which can store many formats. We intend them for digital photos. While it is possible to place sounds, movie clips and several other file formats into these fields, they may not show pictures when you print, AND, if you store other files, any technical support agreement is voided. Data ex Machina does not provide technical support to solve problems which may result from placing non-image files in image fields.

Useable image file formats

VCC allows the placement of many image file types:

EPS - Encapsulated Postscript files (EPSF)

GIF - a cross-platform web-style image

JPG - compressed file format to save large graphics as small files (JPEG)

PCT - a picture format most common on Macintosh (PICT)

BMP - a bit-mapped image format used mainly on Windows

TIF - a tagged image file which can be saved in slightly different formats for Windows or Macintosh (TIFF), and numerous others, including Photoshop's native file format.

The types listed above are the most common.

WARNING: Do not assume the files saved in your camera or scanner default settings are ready to use. They may appear to work, but you could find your VCC file getting so large that your computer refuses to open it. Any file which takes more than a second or two to appear in VCC has not been properly prepared for VCC.

There are big differences in the amount of disk space and file size used by different image formats. Read the sections on preparing photos and selecting a format for saving, then use a format which will not cause your computer and printer to grind to halt when displaying or printing. Properly prepared, small image files provide superior quality and they display and print quickly.

Preparing image files

All digitally-captured images require some preparation for best results in the VCC program. Although you CAN place a picture just as your camera or scanner captured it, that is almost never the BEST way to save the image and it can slow your program down significantly. Images cannot be adjusted in VCC, so you need to make these changes in a digital image program such as Photoshop or the image editing program that came with your scanner or camera BEFORE adding the image to your VCC record:

1. Crop the Photo. This removes unwanted area around the object so the coin fills the height and width of the remaining photo. This step also greatly reduces the amount of disk space used to store the image, which is important to good performance.
2. Resize the Image. Set the size of the cropped photo's width to the coin's actual diameter, while resetting the image "resolution" to between 100 and 300 pixels per inch. Usually a resolution around 200 will give you good print quality without slowing down the print or preview. (If you intend to view but not print images, a setting of 100 is more than enough for good screen images.) Only high-end commercial presses can use more than 300 dots/ pixels per inch. Anything more than that just slows down a computer and its printer without improving the final output at all. (See the "Resolution and file size problems" section for important details.)
3. Adjust the image quality. This is optional, but you can greatly improve the appearance of your photo by doing two things:
 - Select and delete any colored background around the coin itself.
 - After removing the background, try some of your photo programs auto-adjust features for better contrast or more accurate color. These work better after removing any colored background.

We do not intend to teach you how to use your photo software, but the first two steps are very important for good images, and the final adjustment makes the difference between pictures that are barely useable and pictures worth reproducing.

Selecting a format for saving

Save your image in a file format chosen for its results rather than because it was a default for your camera. Only a few image file formats preserve the object size information so you can print items actual size. Other file formats fill the picture area completely, no matter what size the object is. The following file formats preserve the correct object size IF you perform the steps in the previous "Preparing image files" section:

EPSF/EPS - Encapsulated Postscript saved with a JPEG preview

JPEG/JPG (if NOT output or optimized for web settings)

PICT/PCT

TIFF/TIF files sometimes preserve image size information, depending on file compression options and system formats, but they may not display consistently on all computers. Test TIFs on your own computer first.

Other file formats should not be expected to retain the original image size. They will expand to fill the entire available field area (roughly 2x2 inches for each of the 2 fields) both on screen and in printouts.

See the "Resolution and file size problems" section for important details.

Information on file sizes

Different image file formats use different amounts of space in the VCC program. VCC opens an image file using its translators, decompresses the image data, then saves all detail the file provided. A file which was small when saved to disk may use more space inside VCC because compressed image data must be decompressed as it is rewritten into VCC's field.

File formats are listed here based on the amount of space they use in the VCC program, starting with the most efficient (EPS, assigned a "1") and increasing in size as you move down the list. (Each leading number shows an approximation of the space used compared to EPS.)

1. EPS (saved with JPEG preview)
2. GIF (limited to 256 colors, so never best quality)
2. PCT/PICT
5. PSD (Photoshop Document file)
5. TIF
5. BMP
6. JPG with small to medium file settings
7. JPG with high to maximim file settings

See the "Resolution and file size problems" section for important details.

Color vs. Grayscale (B/W)

Color images usually use more disk space than black and white (greyscale) images. Consider saving greyscale images if your primary use for them is to print on a black and white printer.

Our tests of stored images from many file formats in both color and b/w revealed the following variations in file sizes:

- EPS: color used about 1.6x the storage of b/w
- GIF is limited to 256 colors, so no b/w option
- PCT/PICT: color used about 1.7x the storage of b/w
- PSD: used about the same for color and b/w
- TIF: used about the same for color and b/w
- BMP: used about the same for color and b/w
- JPG: color used about 2.5x the storage of b/w

If you are storing JPG, PCT, or EPS, the only formats which consistently preserve the object size, color pictures will increase file size significantly more than greyscale. However, as long as images have been properly resized as described in the section on Preparing image files, you will be able to store many thousands of records with images. (see the "Resolution and file size problems" section for important details)

Resolution and file size problems

The most important thing you can do to be sure VCC continues to work well with your images is to save all images at a resolution (pixels or dots per inch) that is large enough for good printed detail but SMALL ENOUGH to avoid slowing the program down or even crashing the file.

Only high-end commercial presses can use more than 300 dots/ pixels per inch. Anything more than that just slows down your computer and printer without improving the final output at all. What's even worse, overly-large images cause the file size of VCC to increase rapidly.

VCC will open a data file of up to 2 GB! That's a huge file. Properly sized images saved at 200 pixels per inch can be placed in well over 10,000 records without reaching this limit. However, unadjusted images from a 2-megapixel camera can reach this limit after just a few hundred records.

Let's look at how a 1-inch color image saved at 212 pixels per inch compares to the same image saved at 1600 pixels (a typical digital camera setting):

Image Area (212ppi) = 44,944 pixels

Image Area (1600ppi) = 2,560,000 pixels

Viewing On Screen: they will look the same, but the larger image will require several seconds of computer processing before it can display.

Preview Viewing: depending on the number of images to be shown, pages with the smaller images will display in a few seconds. Pages with larger images may require up to several MINUTES to display because the printer driver software must process all images before sending the preview to VCC for display.

Print Quality: NO VISIBLE DIFFERENCE!

Printing Time: printers may require up to 50 TIMES as long to print the larger images even though the print quality will NOT be better!

What's the maximum number of records which can be stored in a 2-GIG VCC file with 2 images per record? That will vary with the file format used, but the 1600 resolution files can cause it to grow in size 100 TIMES as fast compared to using 212 pixel files in your records. You will reach your maximum file size MUCH earlier with the larger images.

Placing smaller image files means you can print images which are just a sharp much faster, the program will display everything more quickly, and you can store 100 TIMES as many records before file size becomes an issue.

Scanner vs. Camera

VCC can use images captured by a scanner or taken by a digital camera, but the two have one important difference which affects how the image works in VCC.

Scanners capture a fixed size area as the image, based on the area of the scanner surface that was selected. Scanners save this "size" as part of the image file if you save the image in a file format that retains size information. This allows you to print actual size images of your coins.

Cameras, on the other hand, capture a fixed number of pixels, but they don't know if the object in the picture is a 1-inch coin or a 30-floor office building. Cameras cannot guess an object's size, so nothing about the size is saved. This missing size information can be added if you adjust the image following the steps in the "Preparing image files" section and save the image in a format that preserves the size information.

All scanners and most cameras are capable of enough image detail for good prints and good screen images. It makes no difference how you capture your image, but the section on preparing image files gives important advice on making your image work well in VCC.

PREFERENCES: USING PREFERENCE PANELS

Opening the Preferences panel

To open the Preferences panel, either click the "Prefs." button just above the Help button at the lower right of the main screen, or select "Set Program Preferences..." in the VCC Actions menu. The VCC Actions menu is available in both VCC and the Help System.

The Preferences panel opens to a "Settings" panel which briefly describes the panels. Click the appropriate tab across the top of the panel to adjust its settings:

- Fields: allows you to relabel the field names on the main screen to match your collection
- Date / (\$): allows you to change the notations used with the numeric date field and currency values in the program
- Tags: provides you with options to reset the tag design, or to reach a screen for building a custom tag design
- Catalog: provides instructions and fields for arranging the 2-column catalog.
- Numbers: allows you to reset the numbering system which assigns ID numbers to your records, and to renumber the current Found Set at any time.

Each of these panels is described briefly in the following sections. (see also the Tags, Catalogs, and Renumbering Records topics)

Closing the Preferences panel

Each panel of the Preferences screen has a "Close Settings" and/or a "Done" button. Click that button to leave the settings when you are done making changes to the preferences. Closing the preferences panel saves all settings.

Settings tab

The Settings panel, which opens on screen from the "Prefs." button or VCC Actions menu choice, is the first tab of the panel. It briefly describes each available preference panel. These can each be opened by clicking the appropriate tab along the top of the preference panel.

The "Close Settings" buttons take you out of the Preferences area, saving whatever changes have been made to any preferences.

The "Reset All Defaults" button, located in the lower left corner of the Settings screen, will return ALL choices you have made about preferences and printing options for the entire program to their default settings at the time the program was installed. If you click it but do not want to reset everything, click "Cancel" to keep your current settings.

Use this reset option if you suspect you have made a mess of trying to set up special options. Many of the customized options have their own reset button which changes only the options on that panel. The one here changes ALL settings to their original defaults.

Fields tab

The Fields tab allows you to change the names which appear next to data fields on the main screen.

Use this panel to create labels which will remind you what to enter in each field. Select names which FIT in the screen space for the name. Create names which will remind you what to enter in each field space.

NOTE: Changing the label of a field affects nothing whatsoever except what appears next to the fields on your main screen. It will not change or move information already in any fields, nor will it affect the actual names of the fields as used internally by the program. These labels do not even appear in printouts. They are for your information only.

The "Use Default Names" button near the lower left corner of the Fields panel will reset the field labels to the actual names of the fields used by the program. There is no reason to use the default names (also shown in small blue lettering for your information after you have given them your own labels).

Date / (\$) tab

The Date and Currency tab allows custom settings for displaying the date entered in the "Date Number" field of your records, and for changing the default currency symbol to be displayed with all currency notations for cost, sale, value, and profit fields in your program and on printouts.

The Date area on the left of the panel allows you to indicate how to display dates entered as Negative numbers, and as Positive numbers, separately. Settings made here affect only the Date Number fields results. This field is new in VCC2. Most people do not want "AD" to appear following the date 2003, but most people prefer to have some special notation such as "BC" for negative dates.

The Currency Notations section at the right controls how currency values are displayed throughout your program and printouts. It is set by default to use the dollar sign, the comma as a thousands separator, and the period as a decimal separator. If you are working with a currency or country which uses other standards to display currency, all of these can be changed on this panel.

Settings on this panel affect every record in the program, so select settings which you can accept for all records. The reset button returns all date and currency settings to their defaults.

Tags tab

The Tags tab will display either a preference panel with 4 preset tag designs, or the screen for the customized tag settings (depending on which design is currently selected for use). From either of these you can click a button to change to the standard tag designs or the custom tag design.

Setting up the Custom Tag is described in detail in its own Help Topic.

The Tag panel for the four preset tags shows information from your latest on-screen record displayed as sample data on each tag. It allows you to:

- Click directly on the tag design you want to use. This selects the chosen tag as your new design and closes the preference panels to save it.
- Click the "Custom" button to move to the screen for designing a custom tag. See the Tags help topic for custom tag setup instructions.
- Make no change by either clicking the Close Settings button or by selecting another preference panel tab.

Catalog tab

The Catalog tab allows you to select which data fields are included in the 2-column illustrated catalog. Changes made on this panel do NOT affect the single-column catalogs in the program.

The text along the left of the panel is a list of the data field names along with the labels you chose for each of them, to assist you in selecting which data fields you want.

The Contents column is where you enter the name of the data fields you want included in the catalog when printed. A pop-up list of the field names will appear for you to select from each time you enter one of these fields. The fields selected will display in the final catalog in the order they appear in this list.

The Punctuation column allows you to choose how you want any punctuation and spaces to appear after each field in the catalog before the following field appears. Be careful not to duplicate punctuation entered here in the individual record fields, or you may end up with double periods ("..") appearing in a catalog entry.

The Sample area at the lower part of the panel displays the record most recently on screen. We recommend using a record with all of the fields filled in to fine-tune the catalog settings based on the Sample.

Entries on the Catalog panel affect how the 2-column catalog will display every record in the program if printed from that catalog. Some records may not display information as nicely as others (especially if you insert tabs in the punctuation fields). You may need to edit the data in the fields within the record itself to affect spacing which varies from record to record. Changes to the Catalog panel affect all records identically, but each record's display will be affected by the length of contents of it's fields.

See also the Catalog help topic.

Numbers tab

The Numbers tab allows you to change the numbering system used to assign an ID Number to a each new record as it is created, and it allows you to renumber the Found Set of records at any time.

The first field on the panel shows the number which would be assigned to next record created. This is also where you set a starting number if you intend to renumber the Found Set of records.

The second field on the panel shows the amount to increase each new number. Usually this would be set to "1" unless you want to increment numbers by a different amount between consecutive records.

The text above the fields also tells you the largest number currently assigned to a record. Use button "C" at the bottom of this panel to set the numbering to begin with the next number after the largest number already used.

The Renumber buttons labelled with A and B will actually change the numbers assigned to the current Found Set or to All records in the program, using the numbers in the Fields above as the beginning points for renumbering.

See the section "Fixing unnumbered records" for details on numbering records which lack any number.

Fixing unnumbered records

When you import records from another file, they may not contain ID numbers.

To locate all records which are missing an ID Number, go to the main screen and click the Find button. While in Find mode, type the "equal sign" (=) into the ID No. field on screen, then click the Find button. If there are any records lacking an ID Number, they will be located.

With this group of records found (the Found Set), click the "Prefs." button and click the Numbers tab.

On the Numbers tab, click button C "Reset Numbers to Defaults" to have the program automatically enter a starting number that is 1 greater than the largest existing record ID Number.

Once that number has been set, click button "A" to Renumber the Found Set of however many records lacked numbers.

The program will renumber them and return to the main screen. (This may take a few seconds, depending on how many records need to be renumbered.)

Records you create later with the New button will be numbered beginning with the next number that would come after the largest one assigned during this renumbering.

RENUMBERING RECORDS

Numbers preference tab

The Help Topic "Preferences: using preference panels" sections on the Numbers Tab and Renumbering records covers all information on setting numbers to use for record IDs and changing those numbers in existing records.

LIST VIEW

Moving and adjusting columns

The List view is new to this version of VCC. You can achieve almost any results you might want in List view. Use the "List" button on the main screen to go to the List view and make adjustments BEFORE printing the List.

List view provides one line for each record with a column for each field. This is more fields than will print across any standard page, even if you set the printout orientation to wide/ landscape. You must adjust it to show the fields you want in the correct order and width for each field.

Select the fields to go into the printable area by dragging in the MIDDLE of the column heading you want to move. Drag the header to the left or right PAST other column headings using your computer mouse. They will reorganize in the order you place them, allowing you to select the columns you want in the order you want them for the printable area.

To adjust the width of a column, DRAG on its heading's right-most EDGE to change its width using your computer mouse.

Check the printout in Preview and make any additional adjustments to the column placement or widths before going ahead with printing. You can choose for the page to print either wide (for more columns) or tall (for more records per page).

Four buttons across the top of the List view screen provide information, sorting, preview/printing and "Go to Main Screen." Red lines at either end of the "Go to Main Screen" button show the approximate right margin of a printed page for portrait or landscape oriented paper.

A button at the bottom turns on or off a running total of the Values for the records on the printout. If the button says "Hide Total at bottom of pages" it will print the total. If it says "Show Total at bottom of pages" it will NOT print the total. This total only shows during the Preview and on the printout, not while viewing the normal screen.

SAVING TEXT FILES & HTML TABLES

Selecting records to save as text

VCC allows you to save a text file outside of VCC for use in other programs. It can save your choice of text fields from any or all records in any order you want the information. The resulting text file can be opened by a vast number of other programs where you can use the saved text any way you want.

Before creating a text file from your VCC records, you need to isolate the records you want and organize them.

First, Find exactly the group of records from which you want to save information. When you create a text file, every record in the Found Set is used to create the text. Use the techniques in the Find topic to locate the records you want.

Second, Sort the records in that Found Set. The text file you create will contain text in the order the records are held at the time the text is created. (see the Sorting Records topic).

When the precise group of records you want to save as text are found and sorted into the order you want them, select "Import/Export..." from the VCC Actions menu.

Exporting records to text

When you select "Import / Export..." from the VCC Actions menu, you will be asked which process you want to perform. Click on "Export".

A dialog boxes tells you that you will need to select fields to export, pick a location to save to, give the new file a name, and select its format. This topic's sections describes each of those steps in detail, so just click OK to continue.

Another dialog box gives you one last reminder IF you have selected only some records to use but might want to include them all. To preserve your specific selection of records in the order you sorted them, click the Set Only button.

VCC now allows you to select the place on your computer disk to save the text file, assign it a name, and offers a pop-up list to select the file format in which to save it. For a text file which you can open in most text-based programs (or import into other data or spreadsheet programs), select either the "Tab-Separated Text" or "Comma-Separated Text" format.

When you have selected the location, name, and text format you want to save, click the Save button.

You then select which field contents to include in the text file.

Selecting fields to include

The screen to specify which fields to include in your text file appears next. Because of the many coded fields used by the program which contain program preferences and other internal information you don't want, do NOT use the "Move All" button.

Select just those fields you want on the left and move them to the right panel one at a time. You can double click on a field on the left to move it to the right, or highlight it and click the Move button.

You can place the fields in any order you want either in by choosing them in that order, or by dragging the little arrows up or down in the list on the right.

When you have a list of fields in the right side panel in the order you want, be sure the "Don't format output" button is selected, then click the Export button.

The text file you named will be created in the location you selected. It will contain the text format you chose with all of the contents of the fields you exported for each record in the found set.

You can then Exit / Quit VCC and use another program to work with the text file, or continue working in VCC, knowing the text file is there waiting.

Saving HTML and other files

When you follow the instructions in the Exporting Records to Text section above, you will notice that the pop-up menu where you select the tab- or comma-separated text file offers some other choices.

Feel free to experiment with them, but we want to point out one very powerful option for people with websites: HTML Table. Selecting that format will allow you export the fields for the selected records in a text file which already contains full HTML coding so it can be opened by browsers and displayed as a table, with a row for each record and a column for each field.

This is the beginnings of a web page to display your records. With very little additional html code or in a web-authoring program, you can turn this into an on-line list of coins, including a price list or other information of your choosing straight out of the VCC program.

It can save you hours of work in turning your records into a web page. Try it. Export some records' fields to the HTML Table format then open that new file in your browser of choice. Enjoy!

THE IMPORT / EXPORT MENU

Import functions

The Import portions of this menu choice are all explained in the "Upgrading from..." topics.

Those topics cover importing records from other VCC files and importing records from other program formats. Because most users will only be importing records during the process of moving old records into VCC when changing programs, we placed the details where we thought they would be used most commonly.

Read those topics for full details on importing information into VCC.

Export functions

The Export portions of this menu choice are all explained in other help topics, depending on what the purpose of the exported information will be. Look in these topics for the appropriate details for your purposes:

"Saving Text Files & HTML Tables" covers the wide variety of ways in which you can export selected contents of your records from VCC to use in other programs such as word-processing, page layout programs or for web-authoring.

"Backups - Protecting Your Records" covers the options for creating duplicate copies of your VCC files to save in case of computer crashes and hard drive failures.

Some of these files can also be used as the basis of creating new databases which you can modify to your own specifications, if you have the necessary software and skills to tackle building your own databases.

Read those topics for full details of Exporting to other file types.

OPEN A FILE...

Opening a VCC file

VCC will open the intended files for the program automatically when you open the VCC program, assuming that you have not moved or renamed any of them.

The best way to open VCC is to use a shortcut/alias for VCC program placed on your desktop by the installer program. Do not double-click the COINDATA or VCC HELP files directly to open them. Launch the program, and it will open the files in the correct order for best operations.

If you click on backup copies of your data files which you saved outside of the program's main directory, the program will still open the main files inside the program folder and display them on screen. The other copy that you clicked to open may also be open, but it probably won't be the file showing on screen. This may not be obvious unless you go to the WINDOW pull-down menu.

The Window pull-down menu, in the menu bar next to the VCC Actions menu, shows a list of all open data files, and you can move among them. Unless you have intentionally opened an additional file, only one COINDATA and the VCC HELP file should be listed in the WINDOW menu.

Opening a closed file

VCC will open other readable or translatable files, including copies of your VCC data files in other locations than the program folder. You must be viewing this Help Topic and Section, then select "Open a File..." from the VCC Actions menu.

You will see a dialog box asking you to locate and identify the file to open. Be sure to select the correct file type for the file you are opening, or it will not appear in the lists of available files.

Once the file is opened, you can switch among open files using the Window pull-down menu (next to VCC Actions in the menu bar).

If you select a file which is not a VCC file format, the open process may fail. If you are trying to import records into VCC from another file, read the Upgrade topics instead of opening the file here.

BACKUPS: PROTECTING YOUR RECORDS

Why Backup?

Backups are copies of your data files which are saved in case your computer crashes, your hard drive dies, your power goes out while you are working, or anything else happens which might make it hard to open or use your files.

In an emergency, the VCC software can be replaced from a CD or Installer, but your coin records were not in the original files! You created those records. They must be protected by having a backup copy of the data so that you won't have to recreate them all again just because your computer sneezed!

There is a saying about backups: Use it or lose it.

Backup or eventually you will lose your records. Computer failures due to power outages are the most common problem, but something WILL happen eventually! Backup your files.

Personal Experience: In the first 60 days of running my first computer (back before DOS, when IBM computers were all mainframes) I had to return my entire machine to the manufacturer to be replaced. They informed me that I was the only customer they had ever encountered who had a backup. My files were reinstalled in just minutes on a new machine. I have since had to replace hard drives right in the middle of auctions and replace corrupted files due to power failures. I make a backup every time I have done more work than I would want to have to redo since the previous backup. I have not needed those backups often, but even once would have been too much if I didn't backup.

Performing a Backup

The Virtual Coin Cabinet provides you with a simple automated system for creating a full copy of your coin records file.

The VCC Actions menu choice to "Perform a backup" gives you the option to backup a full copy of the records File, or to save the Data Only. This menu item is NOT for use with CDs. (see "If you back up to CDs")

The FILE option creates a duplicate copy of your records file. The advantage of the full FILE choice is that the copy of the file can be used instantly as a working file by VCC.

The Data Only option saves a data file that is about 1 MB smaller (and it is "unlocked" for you to build your own structure around the data, if you have the necessary software program and knowledge to design your own database). To get its data back into VCC from this file, see the Upgrading topics for information on importing the data from a file.

Most users will be far better off to save the full FILE copy:

- Be sure to give it a name that make sense but is different that the Coindata file you are using. Your computer can actually become confused about which file to use if you give it the same name.
- Save it on a disk you can still use when your hard drive dies! If you computer disk dies, having your backup file on it with the original is worthless.

Selecting a safe backup disk

Once more: do not save your backup copy on your regular computer hard drive! What good is that backup if you need it because the disk crashed? Store your backup copy on a removable disk.

If your file does not contain many photos, a backup might fit on a floppy disk which you can store in a safe place.

If your file is too big to fit on a floppy, use some other form of removable drive. Iomega Zip disks are popular. There are now many types of removable (or external) drives, including CD-R and CD-RW. (Read the section on CDs if you use CDs for backup.)

The point is to save a backup which won't disappear right along with the dead part of your computer if something goes wrong.

Be sure the backup disk you have chosen has enough room to save the file. If you get an error message or "inadequate disk space" warning, you must assume that the backup copy was NOT properly written, even if your system says the file exists on the backup disk. The file may have been created, but not fully written after you get the error message. Pick a disk with enough space to save your backup file. If you get a disk space warning or an error message, select a different backup location.

If you backup to CDs

If you choose to use CD-R or CD-RW for backup, the built-in backup routine in VCC is NOT the correct way to save a backup to any type of CD.

To save a backup to CD follow these directions:

1. Exit / Quit the program!
2. Insert the CD you will use for the backup
3. Use your computer system's CD burning software to create the CD
4. Select COINDATA from inside the VCC2 directory (folder) as the file (or one of the files) you are saving to CD.
5. Burn the backup CD, remove it, and put it in a safe place.

Restart the program when you are ready to use it again.

Simplified Explanation: the automated backup routine built into VCC will not work to save a file directly to CD because of the complex file structure of the database. VCC's internal backup routine first creates a file structure on the target disk and names the file, then it writes the records into the saved structure. CDs do not allow this multi-step writing of a file so the VCC routine will generate an error when used on CDs.

RECOVERING A DAMAGED FILE

When to use Recover

There may come a time when something goes wrong with the power or your computer crashes while you are actually working in VCC or while it was running in the background. Usually VCC checks its files the next time you start the program and invisibly fixes minor glitches. However, if something really disastrous happened to the file, you could see a message that the program was unable to open your COINDATA file due to an error.

This is the **ONLY** time you should use the Recover command. It is not intended for any type of routine maintenance. Recover can DAMAGE a file if it is used when there is no problem.

The Recover command performs a complex series of steps, reading the pieces of the damaged file and recovering all the data that can be saved. Usually this is enough to get the file running again, but it may take a while. Files with thousands of records and images often take an hour or more to recover.

If you have a very recent Backup of your file, you might prefer to use it and just redo the work since the backup was saved. If that seems too bothersome (or you have neglected your backups for too long for it to be worth using), Recover may be your best option.

Performing a file recovery

If the Virtual Coin Cabinet is running, select Help from the menus. If VCC is not running or Help does not appear when selected, locate the VCC_HELP file in the VCC2 folder on your computer and double-click on it to open Help.

In Help's VCC Actions menu, select "Recover a Damaged File."

VCC will ask you to select the file to be recovered. Locate and select the COINDATA file in the VCC2 directory then click the Open button.

You may be asked where to put the recovered file and what to call it, or it may just go ahead without enquiry, depending on your system and the condition of the file.

When Recovery has finished running, it will show you a report telling if it recovered the file completely. Usually, the recovered file will now work properly. In rare cases, Recover may tell you it was unable to save enough of the file to rebuild it. You will need backup files if Recover fails.

After Recovery: Saving the file

A file which has been recovered will fall into one of these three groups:

1. Files that work just fine
2. Files that will open, but some things don't work correctly or parts are missing.
3. Files that appear to work fine (for a while), but, just when you started to breathe easier about the whole thing, they point their little digital toes in the air and die once and for all no matter what you try next.

Most files are in the first group, but there is no way to be sure if a recovered file is safe to use. The Recovery process has only one goal - to SAVE YOUR DATA. The Recovery process sometimes gives up on preserving the file's structure if it is badly damaged, but it will still try to save the data in your records. That means that some buttons, menu items, printout designs, and little stuff like that may stay trashed though it recovered the records themselves.

Before attempting to use a Recovered file, make a copy of it to another disk. Then, if it turns out the file does not work as it should and it crashes again, you will still have the data protected. This is important because a Recovered file that is too damaged to run will crash again, and it is far less likely that Recover will work on this twice-damaged file.

You may need to import the recovered data into a good copy of the COINDATA file before using it. This is always a safer approach than just using the recovered file.

Restarting with a good file copy

After saving the Recovered File, move it to some location OUTSIDE THE VCC2 DIRECTORY.

You will next need to get a good uncrashed copy of the program ready. This can be accomplished two ways:

1. Locate a backup copy of the COINDATA file, copy it into the VCC2 directory, and make sure it is named "COINDATA" (or COINDATA.VC2 if your computer shows file extensions in the name). Do NOT copy it to where your recovered copy was moved outside the program directory

OR

2. Delete the damaged program directory (VCC2 folder / directory) from your computer disk (but not the saved recovered copy) and then reinstall the program.

WARNING: we did tell you above to be sure that your recovered file was NOT kept inside the program's directory. If it is you could destroy your recovered records when you copy the new file into the directory or replace the directory.

After you have a good working copy of the program ready to use:

- Open the VCC program.
- When the backup or new COINTRAY file opens, Delete all records. (This is the old backup copy or the newly-installed file with sample records, so these records are not what you are trying to preserve.)
- Select the Import/Export item from the VCC Actions menu, and follow the instructions in the section on "Upgrading from Older VCC files"

This will bring all of your recovered data into the new clean file, ready to use again.

How to avoid file damage

To help you avoid crashes which can cause file damage that may require Recovery, we offer a few words on what can cause file damage.

Computer files can become damaged any time there is an error at any level of the hardware or software operations while a file is in use. Because VCC writes data to disk nearly every time you leave a field, the possibility for disk-write errors is much greater than in a program that uses a "Save" command to write to disk only at a specific time.

Among the most common sources of failures which cause file errors are: power failures, including the little "brown-outs" that cause lights to dim slightly for a second. Computers are much more sensitive to these fluctuations than light bulbs. Accidentally kicking the power cord loose from the socket is even worse.

Disks age and die. Files become fragmented, increasing the risk of disk-read/ write errors. If you start to encounter errors on a disk (especially if it's a few years old) test the disk and replace it if there are problems.

Defragment your hard drive periodically to keep it running fast and error-free. If you don't, eventually your computer will slow down until you start to think about replacing it. It may just need some help from a computer utility to bring it back up to speed.

Loose connections in hardware cause bad signals to the CPU, including the gradual loosening of cables from weeks of use if not checked regularly. You move your mouse all the time. Things loosen, so check them WITH THE POWER OFF regularly to avoid problems.

Crashes in any running software can affect any other software open at the same time. This includes system software errors while VCC is running.

Probably the most common and most dangerous error is turning off the computer without shutting down the system. We have seen this as a normal behavior at libraries, large businesses, and places which rely heavily on servers to restore everything when a computer is restarted. VCC needs to be shut down properly before the computer is shut down properly, no matter how you have turned off your computer in the past.

Exit / Quit VCC whenever you are done using it. It only takes a few seconds to start it up again, and, until then, at least it is safe from all of the other things which can go wrong with the system.

ADJUSTING YOUR MONITOR



Resizing the Screen Image

The bottom left corner of the screens shows several tiny boxes with a number (preset to 100) and two little mountain-like graphs. Clicking on a "graph" changes the size of your screen image, allowing you to enlarge or reduce the screen. Make it comfortable to look at and use.

If you enlarge the screen image so much that it won't fit on your monitor, scroll bars will appear on the left and/or bottom to let you reach the off-screen areas as needed.

The screen size was designed for monitors set to at least 800x600 pixels, but monitor sizes and bit-depths vary greatly, so set it as you prefer. Moving from one screen to another will often reset the size to its defaults.

Return the screen to its default setting (or most recent enlargement) at any time by clicking directly on the number to the left of the resizing graph buttons.

Enlarging the Picture Fields

The button with the magnifier image (between the picture fields) will enlarge your screen to twice normal size. It returns to normal resolution if you hit the Enter key or click the Continue button to the left of the enlarged pictures.

You can also resize the images by other amounts using the directions on "Resizing the Screen Image" at any time.

Windows Toolbar in the way?

VCC has been designed for computer monitors set to at least 800x600 resolution. On some Windows computers, the Toolbar of the Windows operating system steals a portion of the screen from every program that is running.

Windows users can go to their settings files and choose to "auto-hide" the toolbar. This causes it to disappear unless you move your pointer to the edge of the screen where it would appear. Then it emerges for you to use, and disappears when you move the pointer away from it.

See your computer's manual or help system for details on changing your system settings. VCC has no control over these settings.

OS X Dock in the way?

VCC has been designed for computer monitors set to at least 800x600 resolution. On Macintosh OS X computers, the Dock uses a portion of the screen unless it is hidden.

Go to your System Preferences to set the Dock to disappear until your pointer is at its edge of the screen.

TROUBLESHOOTING KNOWN ERRORS

Error Messages

If you get an error message, read ALL of the information your computer includes in the error message and write it down. This can provide an important clue to what is going wrong, even if you don't know what it means on your own.

While many error messages seem to be meaningless, others include numbers and "details" which are worth noting. This information will be requested by Technical Support if you report a problem.

Always record any error's details.

Installer won't run in Windows

Windows systems will not allow an installer to run if the current logged in user does not have the necessary permission to modify some settings. This is entirely controlled by the user/administrator settings, even on stand-alone machines with a single user.

Check your network settings and user accounts, even if you are on a non-networked machine. See your computer operating system manual for help with these "permissions" problems. VCC has no control over this stuff.

If you are on a network, check with your network administrator.

VCC won't start in Windows

Windows requires that several files be installed as part of the operating system before it will allow some programs to run. These files are automatically installed if a full installation of Windows was performed as Microsoft intended, but some computers have had modifications made to the basic system by including custom browsers in place of Microsoft's default setup.

Two Windows DLL files are the most likely missing pieces: COMCTL32.DLL and SHFOLDER.DLL

COMCTL32.DLL is used for Microsoft's dialog controls, and VCC will not run without it.

SHFOLDER.DLL is used by the system to find the path to the application and system directories.

Both of these dll's are normally installed by Internet Explorer 4.0 or later, or Service Pack 3 of Windows NT 4.

These files are not part of a standard install on the following systems:

Windows 98 retail (comctl32.dll but no shfolder.dll)

Windows NT 4 With Service Pack 1 or 2 (neither .dll file)

VCC users without these files can get them by installing Internet Explorer 4.x, NT Service Pack 3 or later, or go to Microsoft's web site for downloads. This is part of Microsoft's effort to make sure you have installed their browser of choice if you want other software to work.

VCC quits in OS X

OS X will occasionally let a program launch, but then it quits "unexpectedly" with a cute little message saying the program quit unexpectedly but everything else is just fine. If what you wanted to do was run the program, this is NOT fine, but you get no further clues. This is generally the result of a UNIX "permissions" error.

All OS X systems have more than one possible logged-in user, even if no one else has ever touched your computer. Permissions errors can be caused by any of several things going wrong with the underlying file structure and user log-in process, including:

Your user name lacks full permission to install software.

Your user name lacks full permission to freely read and write to the location where you installed software.

Your permissions were damaged, possibly by accidentally modifying the read/write permissions to a disk or folder, or a disk location's permissions have been altered by a similar action or other error.

Either log in as the "Root" user and reinstall the software, or repair the permissions. These subjects are OSX problems covered in the OSX documentation. Use the system utilities, OS X CDs and system instructions to solve them. VCC requires more frequent disk "access" as it reads and writes data, so it is more sensitive to some OSX system errors than some other programs.

Rely on your computer system manuals for help in solving OS X-based problems. These are NOT VCC problems even though they affect VCC.

Basic Windows solutions

There are several steps which will often solve random problems on Windows computers, most of which are completely ignored by most computer users:

- Shutting down your computer and checking ALL cable and cord connections by actually unplugging them all and replugging them WHILE THE POWER IS OFF! Loose connections cause more problems than anything else.
- Restarting your computer, particularly if you have been running the computer for a long time or have been switching programs a lot since it was last restarted.
- Logging out and Logging back in, being sure to use a user account with full permission for such routines as installing software.

Use the built in Windows utilities/ control panels/ system tools to optimize your hard drive periodically. This may speed your computer up just like when it was new. It can also reduce the probability of disk errors for a while. We have actually known people who were planning to buy a new computer because their old one was too slow. After running the disk clean-up and optimization routines, they felt no other need to "speed" it up. (Note: A new computer may get slower after so much use, just like the old one. Save your money.)

Basic MAC solutions

Classic: If you encounter system errors, see your computer's manual about starting with "extensions off" and testing for conflicts. Both Classic and OS X:

Always test your cables and cords WITH THE POWER OFF by unplugging them all and then replugging them. Loose connections cause more problems than anything else.

Be sure the user log-in you are using has full permission to install software, and that you have full read/write permissions for the disk location of your files.

Sometimes rebooting the computer will solve a problem related to how the system was using memory. Always restart if you get any "out of memory" warning.

OS X: Use the OS X utilities to check and repair your disks if you get any type of unexpected and repeated crashing of a program. Visit Apple's website for help with OS X if you cannot find your manuals.

Printing errors

Computers use print drivers to control all printing processes. VCC relies on the installed printer drivers. On Windows computers, these are usually ".dll" files. On Macintosh they may be extensions or drivers.

Some printer drivers do not work well, and some do not work with certain software. This can be the result of system conflicts, memory errors, registry errors, and a lot of complex system stuff that has to be corrected to get things working properly.

If your software will not print, check ALL of the following, in the following order to save time, from the simplest to the most time-consuming fixes:

- Be sure the proper records to print are the Found Set.
- Be sure the proper printer is set as the default printer for your system, and that it is properly configured. These settings may need to be reset.
- Be sure you have the latest version of your printer's drivers installed for the operating system you are running. Check the printer manufacturer's website for updates.

VCC relies on your computer system for all print capability. VCC has no printer software of its own. (see the Printing topic)

COMPUTERS: SYSTEMS & NETWORKS

Moving between computers

VCC runs on Windows and Macintosh computers, and the COINDATA file (which holds your records) can be moved between computers without having to convert it in any way.

To move your records to a new computer, regardless of its operating system:

- Copy the COINDATA file (in the VCC2 folder on your computer's hard drive) to a moveable media: a zip disk, CD-R, etc.
- Run the VCC2 Installer for the new computer's system on the new computer.
- Insert the media with your saved copy of the COINDATA file in the computer and copy ONLY the COINDATA file from your removeable drive INTO the VCC2 folder/directory on the new computer's hard drive. Let your copy overwrite the newly-stalled file.
- Remove your removeable media.

The program will now run on the new machine with your records ready to use.

WARNING: do not attempt to copy the VCC2 program directory/ folder from one computer to another, even if they have the same operating system. VCC's Installer writes additional files during installation that are not kept inside the program's directory, so just copying that program folder will not reinstall the program.

Using VCC over a network

The Virtual Coin Cabinet is intended to be installed using the VCC installer. It is intended to be run only on the machine where the program was installed.

If you attempt to access VCC across a network, we do not expect it to work. We will not help you try to make it work. If you get it to work, the possibility of errors across a network connection increases the possibility of corrupting your files.

Install VCC on each computer you intend to run it on using the VCC installer for that computer system. You can move the COINDATA file from computer to computer, taking the most recent copy with you as you change machines.

Follow the instructions for "Moving between computers" in the previous section.

RTFM Rant

After providing technical support to users of Windows and Macintosh computers for years, we offer some disturbing observations:

Most Windows users who request help have not yet learned how to locate, copy or move files from one disk to another. We know this because it is part of the help they require while on the phone with tech support. Those who actually saw an error message do not recall what it said because they didn't bother to read it all.

Most Macintosh Classic users who request help have installed so much unused or obsolete software (or games) that they have system conflicts severe enough to affect their computer's ability to run VCC, even though nothing is wrong with VCC itself.

Most Macintosh OS X users who need help are having trouble figuring out where their files are on their drive(s) now that OS X puts everything in new places. With OS X releasing updates almost monthly, the surprises just keep coming. Some OS X updates have even caused Apple's own software to change its behavior. We can't predict what will happen next month on OS X computers.

And most impressive of all -- almost EVERYONE who calls us has yet to read the manuals that came with their computers or software. Oh Brave New World....

Luckily, these generalizations represent a very small percent of all VCC users; most don't require help at all. Who knows, maybe the rest of you are reading the manuals. After all, you got this far!

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Key points in plain English

What's Allowed:

You can use this software, including making one (1) full backup copy of the entire program for your own use.

You can make as many backup copies as you want of the data file in which the records you created are stored.

If you paid Data ex Machina for this Software and the CD or other media on which it was provided is defective, you can return it for a replacement.

What's NOT Allowed:

You may not make copies of this software (except for your personal use).

You may not distribute this software (whether or not a fee is charged for it or for the media on which it is recorded).

You may not attempt to alter the software or its functionality in any way.

Even if you paid for this software, you do not own any rights to the software itself, just the right to use it according to this License.

Passwords

VCC is a password protected file system. Developer passwords are held by Data ex Machina. Any attempt to extract or use developer passwords is a violation of the software license.

VCC software is not user modifiable.

If you want to have this program modified in some way that is not a part of normal program choices, contact Data ex Machina with your requested modification clearly detailed. Data ex Machina will provide a quote for creating a modified copy of VCC which meets your requirements.

Modifications which are performed by Data ex Machina are not covered by any purchase price, registration fee, or technical support fee. Programming work is priced based on the time required to make the modifications to a working copy of the files.

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TECHNICAL SUPPORT & CUSTOMIZING

Technical Support

Technical Support is provided primarily through this Help system.

Live Technical Support is available to those who have paid Data ex Machina for a technical support subscription for the most recent version of this software.

Eligibility for and subscribing to technical support is explained on our web site:

<http://www.dataxm.com>

We do not provide technical support for old versions of VCC. Registration of old versions of VCC does not qualify for personal or live technical support of the latest version.

Customizing VCC2

Data ex Machina provides customized versions of database file systems for individuals and small businesses. We have been producing and using database systems of this type since 1986 for our own business, for coin dealers and collectors, and for other small businesses and non-profit groups.

Contact Data ex Machina to discuss your requirements. We are happy to provide customization services. Be prepared to explain clearly what you want in terms of screen or printout designs or if you need data fields which do not exist in the public release version.

Modifications by Data ex Machina are not covered by any purchase price, registration fee, or technical support subscription fee. All program work is billed based on the time required to make the modifications to a copy of the files.

Current contact information is maintained on our web site:

<http://www.dataxm.com>

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Bug Reporting

Data ex Machina has run this software through months of testing and "beta testing" by willing test users who were familiar with the earlier program version. We hope that it will perform "bug-free" for all users.

However, after 20 years of computer database design, we know that it's possible that something might not work as intended somewhere in a program of this complexity.

If you encounter a problem which you believe is a true "bug" - some part of the program which does not work as we INTENDED - let us know.

Remember, this is only for bugs, things that don't work, not things you WISH worked differently than we intended.

An example of a true bug would be a button that says "Print" but actually switches you to a List view, or does nothing at all. An example of what is NOT a bug is your desire to rearrange things on a preset tag, no matter how important that may be to you. (see the Customizing topic)

Use the current contact information on our website to email us any report of a software bug:

<http://www.dataxm.com>

We will attempt to fix any actual bug and offer updated software.