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Since the time the very first trade was made, people have been looking for innovative ways to keep up with their business transactions. Over the centuries, record keeping has progressed from paper-based systems to high-tech databases. Since these databases are now myriad, when growth requires a company to adopt a new accounting system, the data importation process often becomes a nightmare.

To remedy this problem, The Data Importer has been designed to allow users with adequate computer knowledge to define fields and data structures for easy import into their Acomba systems.

The Data Importer's functions simplify processes such as price changes, customer file additions and file updates. In addition, you will discover many uses for The Data Importer when used in conjunction with the Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable or Inventory applications.

USING THE DATA IMPORTER

To use The Data Importer, simply indicate to Acomba how to interpret the data file prepared with another management system.

STARTUP

After installation and registration, you can run The Data Importer either by means of the menu or the icons.

USING THE MENU BAR TO RUN THE DATA IMPORTER

To activate the **Import Format** function, the first step in the procedure, open the **Input** menu, select the **Utilities** option and click **Import Format**.

If your import format already exists, you are ready to run the **Import Batch**. To do so, open the **Input** menu, select the **Utilities** option and choose **Import Batch**.

USING THE ICONS TO RUN THE DATA IMPORTER

The icons giving access to the two program options are found under the **Utilities** tab of your Acomba system.

IMPORT FORMAT

The first step in the import process consists of indicating to the program how to interpret the data in the chosen file.

The information in the **Import Format** window is grouped under five tabs: File, Synchro, Structure, Modifications and Conditions/Calculations. The first three deal with the organization of the data in the import file.

FILE

The commands found under the **File** tab allow you to locate and identify the file containing the data to import into Acomba. You can use the **Browse** function to display the file tree in order to locate the desired file.

In this screen, you can select to delete the source file following importation. Since the success of the import process depends on the correct identification of the source fields, we recommend that you keep the source file in case you have made an error.

SYNCHRO

The Data Importer lets you import customer, supplier or product data. The Synchro window serves to identify the data that Acomba will find in the import file. Furthermore, it contains the organizational parameters of your database.

IMPORT TYPE

Type

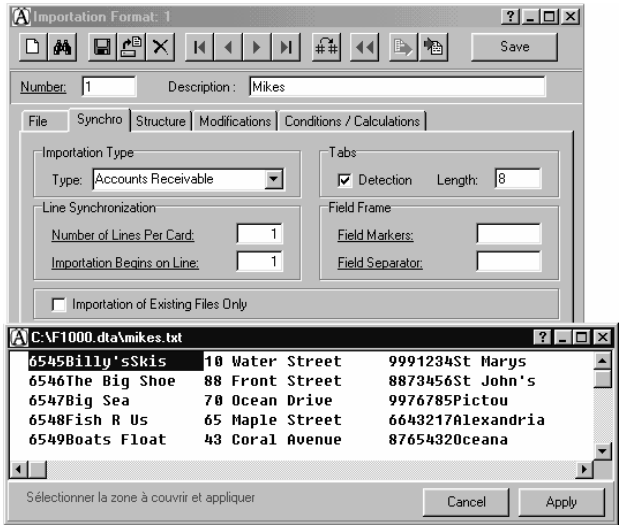
In the **Type** box, select the imported information. Your choice allows Acomba to display the list of fields associated with the data type. This operation is essential for The Data Importer to function properly.

LINE SYNCHRONIZATION

Number of lines per card

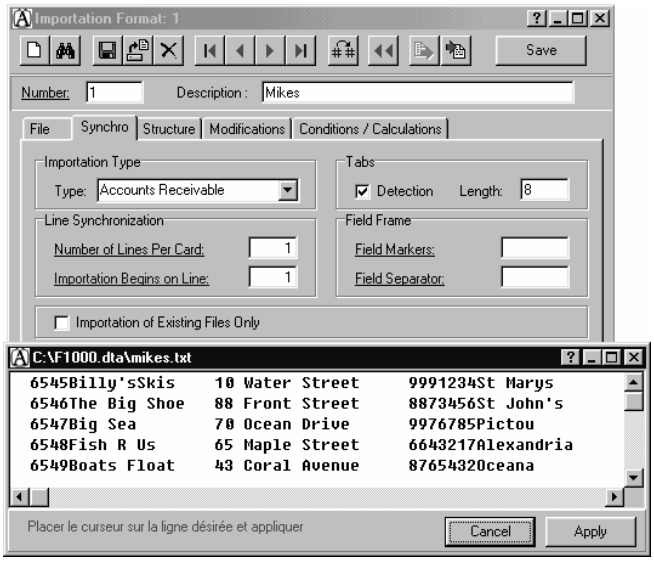
Acomba needs to know the number of lines contained in each database record. This information is indicated in the **Number of Lines Per Card** box.

To help you locate the information, click **Number of Lines Per Card** and the system will display a portion of your file in the frame at the bottom of the screen. Just highlight a record and click **Apply** and The Data Importer will insert the appropriate value.



Importation Begins on Line

It is important to specify the line on which the data begin. This information is entered in the **Importation Begins on Line** box. To help you, when you click **Importation Begins on Line**, the system displays a portion of your file in the frame at the bottom of the screen. Place the cursor on the first line, click **Apply** and the system will enter the appropriate value.



FIELD FRAME

Field Markers

Field markers ensure that only pertinent information will be imported. This option will be useful when managing chain store inventories, for example. To facilitate item location, you may choose to add a code to the product number indicating the store where the item is located. This code may be considered superfluous for import purposes, in which case it would be excluded from the import file. The marker indicates to The Data Importer that the value to import precedes the character identified in the box.

Example:

125445689-Laurier Store

Marker: -

Value Imported: 125445689

Field Separator

In the **Field Separator** box, enter the character used to separate the fields in your record. Each software is different. For one, a semicolon (;) may be used, while for another no character may be inserted. For example, if you were to encounter the sequence "Hello", "John", you would naturally interpret the comma (,) as the separator.

IMPORTATION OF EXISTING FILES ONLY

This option is useful for updating databases. Imagine that the head office has just increased the retail price of certain products and that you received this information in a file. Check this box and the system will check to see if the product processed is in inventory before proceeding with the import process. The existing or already created products that are not in inventory will be ignored.

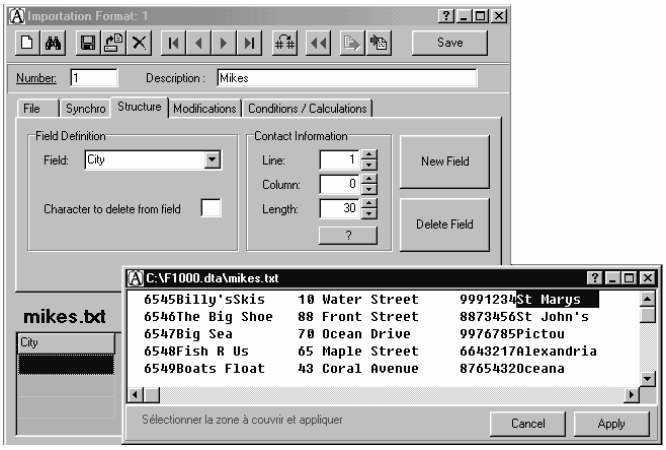
STRUCTURE

The **Structure** window allows you to identify the location of the fields contained in your import file. From information entered in the **Synchro** window, The Data Importer knows that each customer, product or supplier card is entered on one, two or three lines.

First click **New Field** to define a field.

Next, you must give The Data Importer the coordinates of the field in question. For assistance, click the **?** button. The system will display a portion of your file from which you can select the complete field, including blank spaces, then click **Apply**. The Data Importer will insert the appropriate value in the **Field Location** frame.

Finally, select a field from the list displayed under in the **Field Definition** option.



*Press **?** to display a portion of your file to import.*

You can delete an inserted field by selecting it in the bottom of the screen and clicking **Delete Field**. You can likewise identify a character not to import into a field by checking the **Character to Delete from Field**. This option could be used, for example, to remove the # symbol preceding your account numbers.

Structure is the last screen in the import file definition process. The **Modifications** and **Conditions/Calculations** screens are used to define import parameters.

Note
You do not have to define all the fields. You only have to specify the fields to be imported and those defining the cards.

MODIFICATIONS

Let us begin with an example. One of your suppliers has just sent you a new cost-price list of products. The supplier has also taken advantage of the occasion to assign new names to certain items. Should you elect to retain the former names, this does not pose a problem as you can indicate to The Data Importer to only modify the desired fields in your Acomba database. This is where the **Modifications** screen comes into play.

In this screen, the system displays the list of all the fields identified in the **Structure** screen. Just check the field(s) to modify in Acomba and supply the data The Data Importer requires to identify the cards to be modified. In the example of the cost-price list, in the **Structure** screen, you must at least identify the **Product Number** and **Cost Price**, even if only the cost price is to be changed.

If you wish to modify the prices of products in inventory, you do not have to import the remainder of the file at this time.

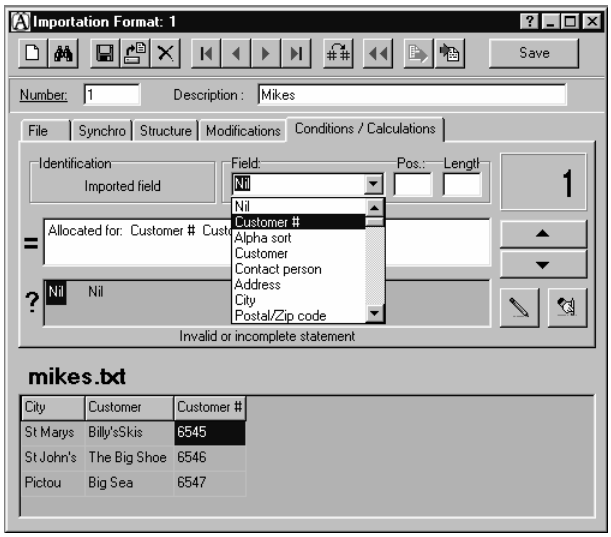
CONDITIONS/CALCULATIONS

The Data Importer lets you modify information marked for import either by selecting only certain cards or modifying the values themselves. To do so, you must fill in the **Conditions/Calculations** screen. This screen offers many possibilities, the most important of which are described below.

The Data Importer uses arithmetic and Boolean operators to define conditions. You can define as many conditions as necessary to accomplish your task.

Consider the example in which you want to import a customer list from which you wish to exclude all customers having the last name "Tremblay".

1. Click the **Define an Action** icon to activate the input window. **BE CAREFUL** not to click **NIL**, which appears by default. If you do, you will have to start the process over again.
2. Place the cursor in the **=** frame (Run…) and click **Nil** to access the scroll menu.
3. Select **Imported Field**.



After selecting an element, the system will display, above the frames, a series of boxes in which you will enter the required parameters.

4. In the **Field** menu, choose the field to process. In the case of our example, this would be **Customer Name**.
5. Place the cursor in the **?** frame (Provided that…). Now, assign a condition to the **Customer Name** field. To do so, click **Nil**, to the right of **Customer Name**, and select the desired condition. In this example, it would be **Including**.
6. Next, determine the action to be executed. Click **Nil**, to the right of **Including** and in the scroll menu that appears, select **Value**, then enter the appropriate value in the field. For our example, this would be "Tremblay".
7. Finally, determine the action to be executed. In the **=** frame (Run…), click the desired action. In our example this would be **Do not process this card**.

NOTE

You can define several conditions to select the cards to process. For example, you can instruct the system to increase the sales price by 10% for all products whose number begins with 200 and to reduce the sales price by 5% for all those whose number begins with 300. In this case, products whose number begins with 400 will not be affected, even if their cost price has changed.

IMPORTING AND EXPORTING FORMATS

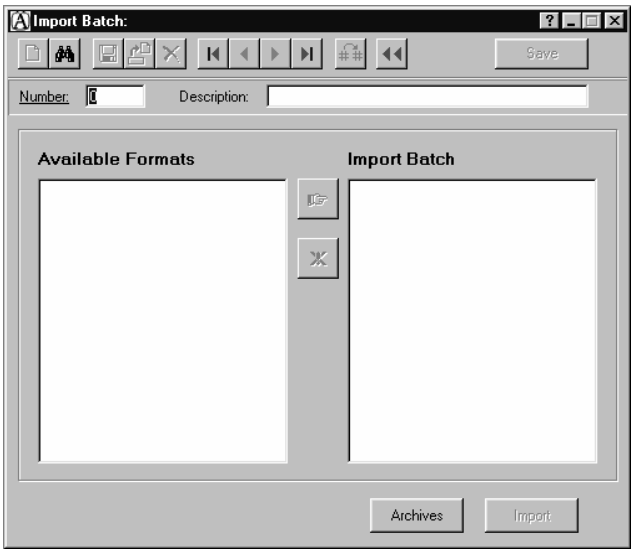
The Data Importer offers the possibility of importing and exporting your formats for use with files to be imported into other companies other than the one for which the format was designed. Click or according to your choice. Note that it is important not to retain the default filename assigned by the system.

IMPORT BATCH

Once the import format has been created, it is time to proceed with the actual importation process. The Data Importer uses an import batch to accomplish this task. In this window, the system displays the list of available formats. All you have to do is choose those you wish to execute and click **Import**.

IMPORT BATCH WINDOW

The **Import Batch** window is divided into two sections. On the left is the **Available Formats** frame. Here, the system lists the formats stored in the application folder. Double-click each desired format. The selected format will appear on the right in the **Import Batch** frame. You can use several formats in a single import operation. However, we recommend that you import one file at a time until you are familiar with the system.



To proceed with importation, click **Import**. In the window that appears, click **Start**.

The **Import Batch** window also has an **Archives** button. Following an import operation, the system creates a file for each card containing a list of the operations performed and the results produced. By default, the archived files bear the name "Batch" followed by the date and time of processing.

SAVING AN IMPORT BATCH

Certain operations are performed on a regular basis. For example, each month, you receive a list of new accounts and a list of price changes. Just as you can reuse import formats, you can likewise save import batches for subsequent use by clicking .

REUSING AN IMPORT BATCH

When you select to reuse an import batch, the system will display a confirmation message indicating that this batch has already been imported on a certain date. To confirm your choice, click **OK**.