Osborne McGraw-Hill

FORMTOOL

made Easy

- *Design and Print Customized Forms for All Your Business Needs*
- *Includes Printer Configurations That Give You Professional-Looking Results*
- *Covers All Major Features*

John Levy

FormTool Made Easy

John Levy

Osborne **McGraw-Hill**

Berkeley New York St. Louis San Francisco
Auckland Bogotá Hamburg London Madrid
Mexico City Milan Montreal New Delhi Panama City
Paris São Paulo Singapore Sydney
Tokyo Toronto

Osborne **McGraw-Hill**
2600 Tenth Street
Berkeley, California 94710
U.S.A.

For information on translations or book distributors outside of the U.S.A., please write to Osborne **McGraw-Hill** at the above address.

FormTool Made Easy

Copyright © 1992 by McGraw-Hill, Inc. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. Except as permitted under the Copyright Act of 1976, no part of this publication may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, or stored in a database or retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the publisher, with the exception that the program listings may be entered, stored, and executed in a computer system, but they may not be reproduced for publication.

234567890 DOC 998765432

ISBN 0-07-881740-4

Information has been obtained by Osborne **McGraw-Hill** from sources believed to be reliable. However, because of the possibility of human or mechanical error by our sources, Osborne **McGraw-Hill**, or others, Osborne **McGraw-Hill** does not guarantee the accuracy, adequacy, or completeness of any information and is not responsible for any errors or omissions or the results obtained from use of such information.

Acknowledgments

All books owe a great deal to many people's hard efforts. Just how much this book owes to the following can only be appreciated by them. My special thanks go to Bryan Pfaffenberger, who put the right touch on nearly every paragraph, and to Deborah Craig, my developmental editor, who pored over every word. This is a much better book because of their hard work. Harriet Serenkin did valuable double service as both developmental editor and technical reviewer of the early versions.

Without the help of Missy Good at Bloc Publishing, I would never have learned enough about FormTool to be able to write this book. Thanks again.

At Osborne/McGraw-Hill, my debts are many and heavy: to Jeff Pepper, who took on this project midstream and figured out what needed doing at exactly the right moment; to Emily Rader, who, with good humor and high spirits, inherited the book and kept it on track. I am also indebted to the Osborne army of project editors, copy editors, and designers: Erica Spaberg, Judith Brown, Marcia Baker, Leslie Tilley, Peter Hancik, and Erick Christgau, to mention only a few.

I have a special debt to my daughter, Chloe Levy, who brought me to meet the many wonderful people at Osborne/McGraw-Hill. I also owe much to Roger Stewart, who thought up this project and entrusted it to me.

To Guy Cohen, Rex Wickencamp, and Carrie Mitchell at Hewlett-Packard, my thanks for technical help and the loan of numerous printer

cartridges; to Pacific Data Products for the loan of the 25 in One! III cartridge; to SoftCraft, Inc., for the loan of the SoftCraft Font Editor.

To my colleagues and fellow workers at the Berkeley Adult School, many thanks; especially to Atsushi Maki, our resident computer wizard, and to Rita Belserene for the valued loan of her HP DeskJet Plus; finally, to Myretta Whitaker, our school secretary, who flooded me with forms.

此为试读,需要完整PDF请访问: www.ertongbook.com

Introduction

A Thumbnail History of FormTool

There are two kinds of software: the type that grew out of someone's bright idea, and the type designed to solve a particular set of real problems; FormTool belongs to the second category.

Originally designed for a general contracting and construction company in southern Florida, FormTool was first set up to collect information, but the designers soon discovered that its most original feature was designing, printing, and filling out forms. Since that time, FormTool has grown and evolved in numerous ways, but throughout its history, it has remained easy to master.

About This Book

FormTool Made Easy is a step-by-step course for new users of FormTool. In the early chapters of the book, you learn to load and print a ready-made form. From there you move on to designing and printing your own form. As you become more knowledgeable about FormTool, the book presents more complicated features, always building on what you have already learned. The

middle chapters show you how to use FormTool to fill out forms with data you have stored in FormTool: in ASCII (text) files, in databases, and in spreadsheets. In the final chapters, you learn how to customize FormTool to get the most out of your printer, as well as how to extend the power of FormTool by using downloadable fonts and font cartridges.

This book makes the assumption that you know what you want a form to look like or accomplish, but have not learned to use a computerized form generator before. As for prior computer experience, this book assumes minimal experience with DOS. Two of the chapters show you how to merge information saved in a database or a spreadsheet into a FormTool form; these chapters assume you are already familiar with database or spreadsheet programs.

You will get the most out of this book if you practice everything you learn to do several times. Follow the steps as they are laid out, then repeat them as you remember them. Finally, close the book and experiment on your own. Above all, be prepared to make and learn from your mistakes. You will learn more by solving a few problems with hands-on experience than by reading the ten best books on any subject. By solving real problems, the techniques become yours. Early on, you should think about how the forms and techniques you learn about here can be applied to problems you need to solve in your own work.

As you become more familiar with FormTool, take the time to study the many forms packaged with it. Try to figure out how the form makers used the simple techniques in this book to create the many complicated-looking forms.

If you enjoy technical challenges, you may want to teach yourself to draw or scan images, capabilities you can incorporate into a downloadable font using a tool such as SoftCraft's Font Editor, and which allow you to print forms with graphic images or logos. Unfortunately, these techniques, while not overly complicated, lie beyond the scope of this book.

Specific Assumptions Made in This Book

- **Installation** You must follow the instructions in the manual for installing FormTool. Since installation of each version of FormTool

may be slightly different, this book will not give any specific information about installing the program. In general, installation is self-explanatory and easy.

- **Hardware** Although it is possible to use FormTool with a dual floppy disk drive system, I do not recommend this. You will get the most out of the program if you have a hard disk with several free megabytes of space. Theoretically, it is even possible to use FormTool with a single floppy disk drive system, but I am skeptical about how effective that would be in practice. It is also possible to install FormTool on a hard disk system and then copy the necessary files onto a 720K floppy disk for use on a Toshiba single floppy laptop; however, you must do this on your own.

  FormTool works best with 640K of memory. It won't benefit from more than this, but it definitely will be limited if you have a 256K system.

- **Configuration** Before you start using FormTool to design and print forms, do a Configuration from the Main menu. Remember to select PrintVision Preview On. Also, I recommend that you select PostScript Off. The PostScript option, if it is available in your version, is extremely limited and limiting. For example, it does not support any PostScript emulation cartridges, and it permits use of only one font per form! If you have followed the growing number of reviews of form generation software in computer magazines, you know experts are generally agreed that PostScript is not recommended even for the high-end packages costing many times what you pay for FormTool.

- **Printers** FormTool works with a vast variety of printers. In this book, I generally assume you have a Hewlett-Packard LaserJet or compatible for two reasons: First, it is the standard for businesses and offices; second, it is much faster than a dot-matrix printer. From time to time, I give information on things you can do with Epson-compatible dot-matrix printers. Also, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, I assume you will not use a PostScript printer.

If, for some reason, you have not purchased and registered a copy of FormTool, I recommend you do this immediately. The price is more than fair

and this purchase opens the door to technical support from Bloc Publishing. I assure you the support alone is worth the price of the package.

How This Book Is Organized

Chapter 1, "FormTool Fundamentals," gives a brief overview of FormTool; it then shows you how to open a set of forms, select a form, load the form into the Editor, preview, and print it.

Chapter 2, "Creating Your First Form," describes how to create a form from scratch.

Chapter 3, "Revising a Form," teaches you how to edit, revise, or adapt an existing form. In particular, you will learn about some of FormTool's features and you will start learning some editing techniques.

Chapter 4, "Retrieving Forms," explains some basic techniques for retrieving forms with two different tools: the Forms Organizer and the Forms Manager.

Chapter 5, "Using Forms Designer," contains a detailed review of all the major features of the Forms Designer Editor.

Chapter 6, "Managing Forms," shows how to use all of Forms Manager's major features for storing, organizing, and retrieving forms.

Chapter 7, "Filling Out Forms On-screen," tells how to prepare a form to be filled out on-screen using two different techniques: Easy Fill-out and Master Form Merge.

Chapter 8, "Merging from Databases," describes how to merge information from a database such as dBASE III Plus into a FormTool form.

Chapter 9, "Merging from Spreadsheets," teaches you how to merge information from a spreadsheet such as Lotus 1-2-3 or Excel.

Chapter 10, "Customizing a Printer Driver," explains how FormTool stores information about printers, as well as how you can change or customize this information using FormTool's Print utility.

Chapter 11, "Using Soft Fonts and Cartridge Fonts," deals briefly with downloadable soft fonts and printer cartridges and how you can customize FormTool to use them.

Contents

1 **FormTool Fundamentals** 1
What FormTool Can Do 1
Advantages of FormTool 3
Working with the Forms Manager 5
Navigating Through FormTool 9
A Quick Tour of the Forms Manager 9
Understanding FormSets 11
Unpacking a Set of Forms 12
Examining the Form Listing Box 13
Viewing Forms 15
Using the Editor 15
Loading a Form into the Editor 15
Looking at the Editor Screen 16
Looking at the Form 17
Previewing Your Form with PrintVision 18
Printing a Form 22
Deciding Between Draft and Final Quality Print 23
Printing 26
Exiting from Forms Designer and FormTool 27

2 **Creating Your First Form** 29
Creating a New Form and Exploring Forms Designer 29
Exploring Editor's Function Key Menus 31
Adding Text and Lines 34
Saving Your Work and Exiting 37
Adding More Lines and Text to Your Form 38
Adding a Grid 41
Editing the Grid 42
Centering Headings in a Grid 43
Finishing the Form 44
Previewing and Balancing the Form 46

3 **Revising a Form** 49
Why Revise? 49
Planning Your Revision 50
Loading the Form for Editing 52
The Form's Layout 52
Alternative Strategies for Revising Margins 55
The Text and Attribute Layers 55
Examining the Text 56
Examining Attributes and Fonts 57
How Your Printer Choice Affects Attribute Availability 59
Changing the Paper Size 60
Deleting Unwanted Text and Attributes 60
Erasing Vertical Lines and Their Attributes 61
Marking and Deleting a Block of Text 62
Repositioning the Form 63
Marking and Moving a Block of Text 64
Moving Attributes 65
Reconstructing the Right Side 67
Modifying the Box 68
Adding the Vertical Line below the Box 68
Adding Attributes to the Box and Lines 69
A Midway Preview 70
Saving an Interim Form 71

此为试读,需要完整PDF请访问: www.ertongbook.com

Adding Text and Attributes to the Form 71
Inserting Rows 72
Adding Lines of Text 73
Drawing a Grid 73
Adding Text and Vertical Bars to the Grid 76
Finishing the Bottom of the Form 76
Previewing, Saving, and Printing the Final Form 77

4 Retrieving Forms 79
Retrieving Forms with Forms Organizer 81
Starting Forms Organizer 81
Searching for Forms by Name and Date 82
Understanding the Results of a Search 84
Understanding Categories 85
Assigning Category Names 86
Searching for Forms by Category 87
Retrieving Forms with Forms Manager 88
Starting and Quitting Forms Manager 89
Changing FormSets 90
Sorting the Form Listing 91
Viewing the Form Before Opening It 93
Summarizing Your Form Retrieval Options 94

5 Using Forms Designer 97
Suggestions for Creating Successful Forms 98
Take Time to Plan 98
Be Clear 98
Keep Your Forms Simple 100
Know What FormTool Can and Can Not Do 102
Make Sure Your Form Serves Its Purpose 102
Know Your Form's Users 102
Check and Revise 103
Choosing Options 103
Choosing Setup Options 104
Choosing Page Size Options 105
Changing Tab Settings 106
Choosing Page Formatting Options 108

About the Replace, Insert, and Word Wrap Modes 109
Navigating in Forms Designer 111
Erasing a Form and Starting Over 111
Drawing Lines, Creating Grids, and Erasing Lines 111
Drawing Lines 112
Creating Grids 113
Erasing Lines 114
More About Block Operations 114
Marking the Block 115
Performing Block Operations After Marking the Block 115
Typing and Aligning Text 118
Vertical Typing 118
Aligning Text 120
Large Letters 121
Using Attributes 122
Adding Attributes 123
Removing Attributes 124
Adding Check-off Squares 126
Shaded Borders 127
Loading Shading Characters from Key-Pad Char. Sets 127
Large Reverse Letters 129
Working with More Than One Form at a Time 131
Opening Additional Forms 131
Viewing a List of Active Forms 132
Copying Information from One Form to Another 132
Exiting FormTool with Two or More Active Forms 133

6 Managing Forms 135
How FormTool Stores Forms on Disk 137
Starting Forms Manager 137
Copying Forms 138
Moving Forms 139

Reorganizing Forms 140
Changing the Current Directory 141
Deleting Forms 142
Creating a New FormSet 143
Backing Up and Restoring Forms 144

7 **Filling Out Forms On-screen 147**
On-screen Data Entry with Easy Fill-out Forms 148
Rules for Creating Easy Fill-out Forms 149
Creating a Form for Easy Fill-out 149
Starting a Fresh Template 160
On-screen Data Entry with Master Form Merge 160
Modifying a Form for Master Form Merge 161
Setting Up a Master Form Merge 161
Filling Out the Form On-screen with Master Form Merge 166
Managing Records with Master Form Merge 169
Altering the Field Structure Once You've Created It 170
More Merging Techniques 171

8 **Merging from Databases 173**
Understanding the Two Ways FormTool Works with Database Data 175
Creating an ASCII File for Merging into FormTool 177
Checking the Field Sequence 178
Understanding Comma-delimited Files 179
Typing the File 179
Merging the ASCII Data File 181
Printing the Records 184
Importing Data Directly from a dBASE Database 185

9 **Merging from Spreadsheets 189**
Importing from a Database Range 190
Creating the Database Range 191

Importing the Spreadsheet Data and Printing the Forms 195
Importing Data Using an ASCII File 196
Clearing the Merge Fields from MYMERGE 196
Creating and Saving the Spreadsheet 197
Creating an ASCII File 199
Importing the ASCII File into MYMERGE 200

10 Customizing a Printer Driver 205
Managing Printers without PRNTUTIL: A Review 207
Adding Printer Drivers 207
Choosing Fonts 209
Finding the Right Printer Driver 210
Making Changes to a Printer Driver 211
Using Printer Escape Codes 213
What Escape Codes Do 213
Viewing and Printing the Current Escape Codes 214
An Illustration: Modifying the HP LaserJet Driver 215
Adding Escape Codes to an Existing Printer Driver 217

11 Using Soft Fonts and Cartridge Fonts 223
Using SoftCraft Laser Fonts 226
Using Hewlett-Packard Soft Fonts 227
Using Font Cartridges 229

Index 231

1

FormTool Fundamentals

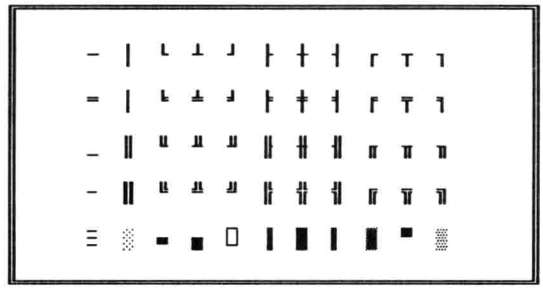
FormTool is a program for designing, editing, and printing forms such as schedules, lists, check registers, invoices, and applications. In short, you can use FormTool to create any of the vast variety of paper forms making up the bulk of office work.

This chapter begins with an overview of FormTool, describing what distinguishes it from other ways of creating forms and from competing software. The chapter then explains how to open a set of forms, select a form, load the form into the editor, preview the form, and print it.

What FormTool Can Do

FormTool is text-based; that is, it uses the symbols in the IBM extended character set to create text, draw lines, and make grids and boxes. This character set includes the letters of the alphabet (upper- and lowercase), numbers, punctuation marks, and foreign language characters. It also in-

cludes many unusual graphics characters used primarily for drawing lines or forming corners, as shown here.



Because it is text-based rather than graphics-based, FormTool can print forms on virtually any printer, including most daisy-wheel printers.

The heart of FormTool is the Forms Designer, an easy-to-use editor that enables you to create, edit, and print forms of all types and sizes. You can use the Forms Designer for three things: printing ready-made forms, customizing ready-made forms, and creating forms from scratch.

The Forms Designer Editor (hereafter referred to as the Editor or, simply, Editor) provides tools for creating, editing, and printing all your forms (a screen is shown in Figure 1-1). The Editor has a unique utility, the Grid Generator, which produces perfect grids simply and quickly. If you want finer control over line drawing, the Editor lets you draw grids, lines, boxes, and columns with a simple, manual drawing feature. As Figure 1-1 shows, the Editor provides a precise matrix of numbered rows and columns. Within this matrix, you create your form, seeing in advance just how it will appear when printed.

In the Editor, you can type and manipulate text much as you would in a word processing program. You can wrap the text, center, left-align, right-align, or fully justify it. You can add emphasis with boldface, underlining, or italics; type vertical text; and create large banner-style letters, which you can then surround with a variety of shaded backgrounds.

FormTool comes bundled with PrintVision, a utility that lets you preview a form to see exactly how it will appear on the printed page. This can save mountains of crumpled paper. Since printing can be a very slow process—depending on your computer and printer—PrintVision can also be a big time-saver.

此为试读,需要完整PDF请访问: www.ertongbook.com