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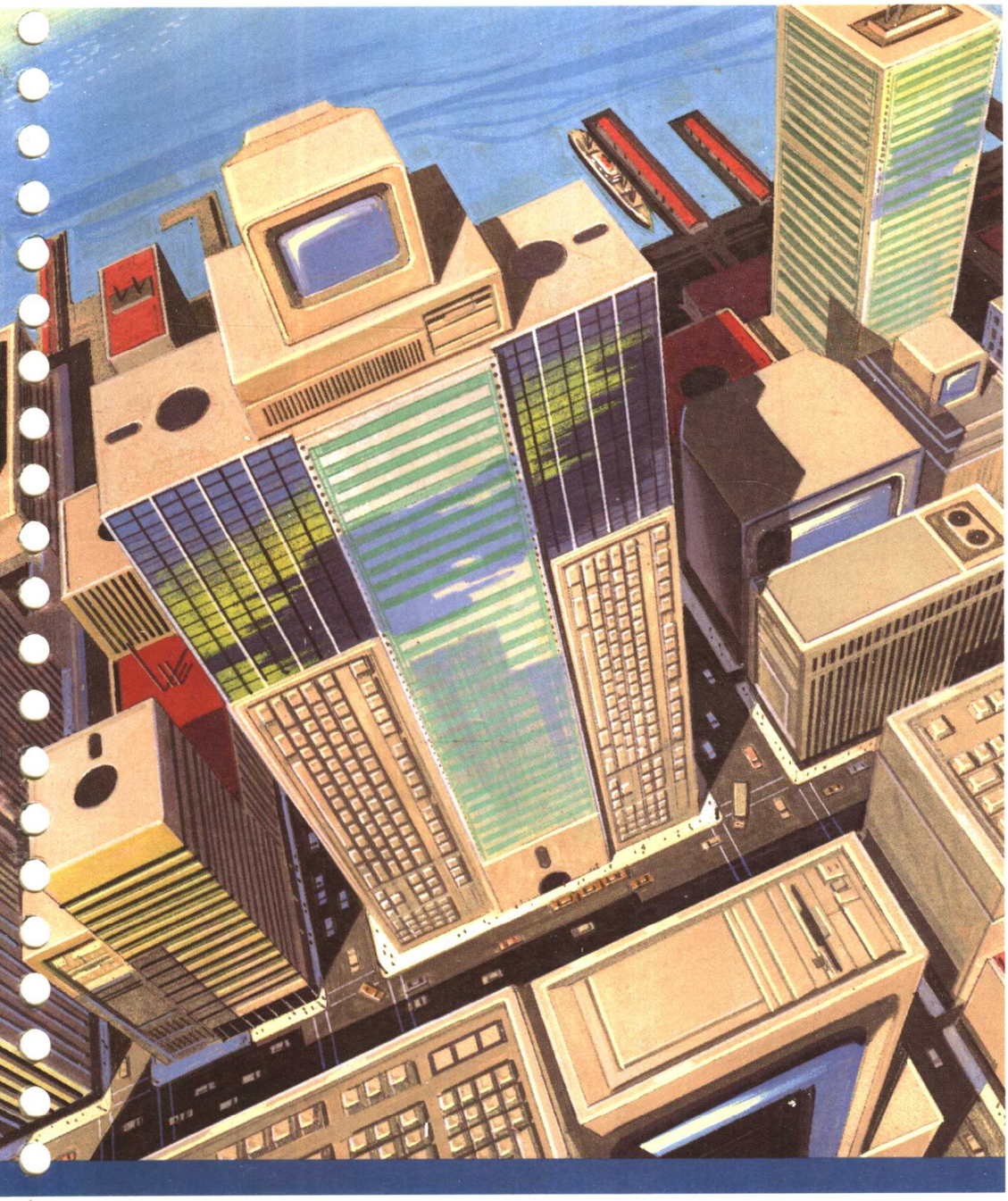
for the IBM PC



Alternate Edition
with VP-Planner,
dBase III/III Plus,
and WordPerfect

LON INGALSBE

Business Applications Software for the IBM PC

Alternate Edition with VP-Planner, dBase III/III Plus, and WordPerfect

Lon Ingalsbe
Portland State University

Merrill Publishing Company
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Columbus Toronto London Melbourne

To my wife Marita, and our children
Marguerite, Claire, and Brent.

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Preface

The advent of the microcomputer is bringing revolutionary changes to the information environment of today's businesses. As these changes continue to affect every aspect of the business organization, many individuals, untrained in the discipline of programming theory, will be expected to use microcomputers to perform their everyday tasks.

This textbook is designed for any course in information systems, business, accounting, or related fields where learning to use applications software as a problem-solving tool is necessary. The text has been carefully conceived to provide students with hands-on experience with microcomputers so that they can become functional with the applications software as quickly as possible. Every portion of the text has been extensively class-tested with students of varying degrees of sophistication with microcomputers. The result is a text that will work equally well with students who have extensive programming background as with those who have little or no exposure to the computer and to computer fundamentals.

Scope and Sequence

This text has been organized in five self-contained modules that take students command-by-command through the use of the software, the capabilities of the program, and its advantages/disadvantages for given applications. The modular format allows the instructor to choose which packages to teach and in what order.

Each module has been organized in an easy-to-follow format that has been developed for maximum flexibility:

- Each module begins with an introduction that effectively introduces the student to the key fundamentals and terminology of the application.
- *Tutorial exercises* take the student step-by-step through the basics of the software, introducing them to essential commands, concepts, and structures. The objective of this section is to bring students to an initial level of competency with the software.
- The *Operation and Command Summary* is an alphabetic index of commands, functions, and control keys with brief explanations and/or examples. This summary is both an effective reference guide and review

source. The summaries have been tabbed throughout the book so that the students can locate them easily.

- *Additional topics* are covered to explore important advanced topics that are more appropriately taught by example than tutorial. These sections are based on examples that will allow students to enter the data provided to further their understanding.
- The *Hints and Hazards* section presents tips for improving efficiency and avoiding frustrating pitfalls in the use of the software.
- *Study questions* test the students' understanding with carefully thought-out questions that focus on conceptual issues involved in using the software.

Text Organization

The text begins with an introduction to the fundamentals involved in using microcomputers and applications software. This section covers the use of microcomputers in business, microcomputer operations, and the basics of DOS. A discussion of the most important DOS commands and DOS utility programs is included, as well as an explanation of concepts that are common to various applications software (including file creation and maintenance, numeric and string data expressions, and relational and logical operators). General exceptions to these rules are explained where they occur. The student will need to refer to this section of the manual periodically to review important concepts as they apply to specific microcomputer applications.

Software Coverage

The software applications chosen for this text include the key software packages that students will use once they are on the job.

VP-Planner® is a powerful spreadsheet software that may be used to teach students all of the popular spreadsheet skills and operations. Knowing these skills and operations is rapidly becoming a job requirement for many organizations and a growing number of college courses are requiring students to use spreadsheets in their course work.

WordPerfect® is still the most popular word processing software ever. Learning to use a word processing application is immediately useful to students who will use it to write papers, résumés, and written assignments.

dBase III® is perhaps the most important software application for students to learn since the majority of the data processing problems faced by today's organizations concern effectively managing, manipulating, storing, and retrieving database-type data.

BASICA has been included for those who are in transition from BASIC programming to applications software or require their students to have prior knowledge of BASIC and plan to review the subject. This section is also a valuable resource for students who want to learn some programming skills to enhance their use of applications software.

The final module of the manual introduces a subject neglected in other texts of this type. *Data Transfer between Applications* provides instruction on how to move data from one software application to another. For students willing to experiment with the subject, this module provides the opportunity to gain a conceptual understanding of the basics of data structure as well as the

ability to use applications software to the greatest extent of its processing power.

Design Features

Because it is important for students to check their work against what is happening on the computer screen while they are learning, we have included accurate representations of the screens throughout every instructional step of each module. These screen representations provide immediate feedback regarding student's correct interaction with the software, as well as signaling errors or hazards that many have occurred while the student was inputting data. These should be checked at every stage while the student is working through software.

The use of color in this text has been designed for maximum instructional benefit. Every time the text signals hands-on work at the keyboard, the type appears in blue rather than black. The explanations, then, are distinct from the tutorial sections, and students are easily prompted as to when they are next expected to enter data with the keyboard. Further, the use of color separates the computer's response from the user's input, making it easy for the students to see the results of their input.

Acknowledgments

In 1982, the Earle A. Chiles Foundation provided a grant to the School of Business, Portland State University, for the purchase of a microcomputing laboratory to be used by students and faculty. Without this far-sighted action, and the Foundation's continued support, this manual would not have had the opportunity to be written.

After five years of use here at PSU, the manual has evolved through four rewrites to its present form. Its continued success at reaching its learning objectives is due largely to the constructive feedback of over 4,000 PSU students and their instructors.

A special acknowledgment is appropriate for Brent Simonson, PSU 1985 graduate. Without Brent's research, writing, technical expertise, and desire for excellence, much of the material in this manual would have suffered.

I thank all of the faculty and staff of our School of Business for the support and encouragement they have given me over the years. Without it, the additional task of writing this manual would have been overwhelming.

When it became time to have the manual published, a new group of individuals became involved in helping produce the finished product. These individuals reviewed the manuscript and then provided many valuable additional comments and suggestions. I would like to thank the following people for the thought and effort they contributed to this project: David Cooper, University of Connecticut; Darlene Lanier, Louisiana State University; Dan McNamara, College of St. Thomas; James Kasum, University of Wisconsin; Leonard Chochrek, University of Texas at El Paso; Robert McGeein, Bowling Green State; Larry Hegstad, Pacific Lutheran University; Michael Dunlap, University of Williamette; Paula Hall, University of South Carolina; Tom Haresign, Southampton College; Sue McDonough, Josten's Educational Systems, Inc and Southern Ohio College.

Finally, the staff of Merrill Publishing Company deserve special recognition for their efforts to produce this text. Their attention to detail, concern for pedagogical issues, and commitment of resources have resulted in producing the best possible finished product. In particular, I'd like to thank Pam Hedrick-Bennett, production editor, and Vern Anthony, administrative editor, for their efforts.

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