

Gerald's Column *by Gerald Fitton*

Note for GoldLine Users

The applications TableMate and Equasor can be found on the GoldLine disc as the archives [Gold.Progs.Mate/zip] and [Gold.Progs.Equasr/zip] respectively.

Introduction

Last month I described one method of importing tables into Impression; that method was to use the original version of TableMate. As a direct result of the article I have received many letters about the use of TableMate but most have been questions rather than answers. I shall try to answer some of those questions in this article and, at the same time, I shall illustrate my answers with a more recent version of TableMate, version 4.05a (30 Jun 97).

Other Possibilities

Please do not assume that the reason I chose TableMate for last month's article is because I believe it to be the best package having the facilities I described. The reason I chose it and chose to use that version is because it was 'bundled' with Impression; everyone who bought Impression Publisher or Impression Style will have it. Of course, as many of you have remarked, you can use something which is more expensive; the favourite amongst my email correspondents is Eureka. However, I would like those of you who have written to me praising the additional features of Eureka to accept that, for many people, a simple means of making tables such as the original TableMate will be more than adequate.

TableMate 4

The version of TableMate I used in my first article was Version 1.10g. The version I shall use for this article is 4.05a dated "(30 Jun 97)". Some people refer to it as TableMate 4 or as TableMate Designer.

At the time when I bought it the price was about £35, it may be different now, but I used the £15 voucher supplied with Impression to buy it for £20 (plus the voucher).

The last address I have is:

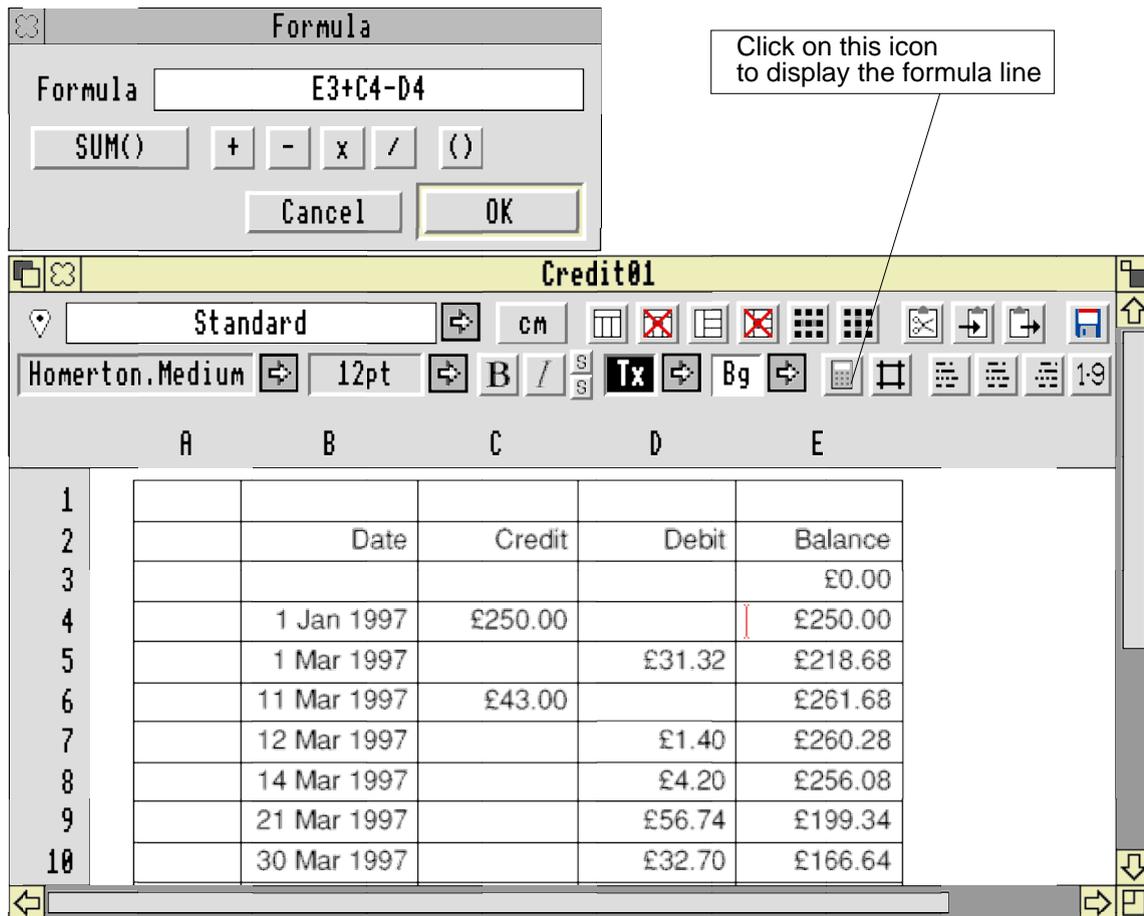
Dalriada Data Technology
74 Greville Road
Warwick
Warwickshire
CV34 5PL
Telephone: 01926 492459

Please note that this address is different from the one given on the original voucher!

TableMate Designer as a Spreadsheet

One of the differences between TableMate Designer (Version 4) and the one which I used in the earlier article is that this version can be used as a simple spreadsheet. It supports the usual four arithmetic functions (+, -, × and ÷) together with relative and absolute cell referencing. You can add your own currency prefix such as £ or \$.

The screenshot below highlights the spreadsheet functions of TableMate Designer.



I always get asked how I make these screenshots. I created the TableMate Designer table in TableMate and took a screenshot of it with the formula line showing. I loaded the screenshot into Impression and then used the Impression to Draw OLE feature to load the screenshot into DrawPlus. In DrawPlus I added the words "Click on this icon <Return> to display the formula line <Return>" and then I drew a small rectangular box around the words and a 'pointer' to the formula button.

You can enter formula only by first calling up this separate formula dialogue box.

In the screenshot you'll see the simple spreadsheet functions which are available. As far as I know TableMate does not support any other spreadsheet functions. Many people who have not used a spreadsheet previously will find that this level of spreadsheet functionality is all that they need. I suggest that for many of you, the extra cost of buying fully featured

spreadsheets such as Eureka, PipeDream, Fireworkz or Schema is not justified.

If you want something more sophisticated than TableMate Designer but rather less than the four major packages listed above then TableCalc might be more suitable. I shall describe TableCalc next month.

Other Features

Word wrap within columns is implemented so that, as you type more text into a spreadsheet cell the row height changes automatically; it grows downwards. Users of Fireworkz will feel comfortable with this feature. You can select font styles and font sizes.

You can join adjacent cells together both horizontally and vertically to make a 'big cell' in the same way that you can in Eureka. You can break them open again. You can add or insert rows and columns and the cell references change automatically.

Object Linking and Embedding (OLE) is fully implemented so that you can import DrawFiles into any cell (rather like PipeDream) but (unlike PipeDream) you can work on them in Draw using the OLE feature.

There is a feature which allows you to Cut and Paste blocks to and from the clipboard.

From TableMate you can Save in CSV, DDF, Draw and even HTML format! Some of you wanting to add simple tables to your web site will be interested in this last format.

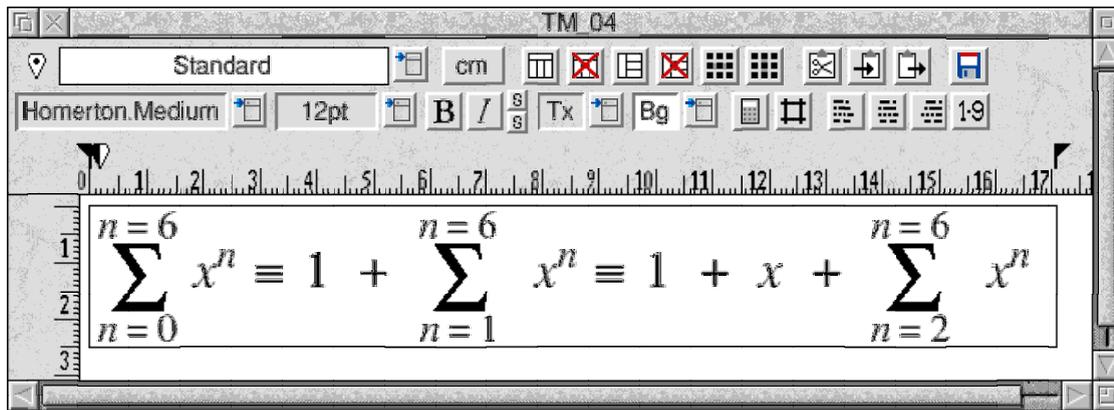
My conclusion from all this is that if you want a simple spreadsheet at a budget price and you want to output your tables to Impression for printing or to your web site for viewing with a browser then TableMate Designer may be all that you need.

More OLE

The OLE feature also links backwards with Equasor. TableMate can import files created in Equasor as well as Draw.

$$\sum_{n=0}^{n=6} x^n \equiv 1 + \sum_{n=1}^{n=6} x^n \equiv 1 + x + \sum_{n=2}^{n=6} x^n$$

I created the equation which you see above using Equasor. The version shown above has been Saved as a DrawFile from Equasor and loaded into Impression.



This next screenshot (above) is a screenshot of the same formula but within a TableMate document. In the TableMate file (which you will find as [TM_04] on the monthly disc and elsewhere) it is an Equasor file (embedded within the TableMate document) which you can recover into Equasor using the OLE command. By the way, I'm sure I mentioned it, to OLE the Equasor formula from TableMate back to Equasor all you need do is hold down the <Ctrl> key and double click on the TableMate cell.

The Equasor formula is embedded in TableMate but, without the appropriate Equasor fonts loaded, when the TableMate file is loaded into Impression, there will be a problem with the display of the Equasor fonts.

Large Tables

I can do no better than to quote an email which I received from Michael Burkhardt:

“But now to the problems with OLE in Impression. Impression is not able to split a graphics frame between two pages. Therefore it is not possible to create long OLE tables. You always have to trick around with several graphic frames containing different views of the same graphic (or OLE file). This is one of the big disadvantages of Impression! Too bad that there is no further development of it.”

In my reply I said:

“I believe that Ovation Pro suffers the same way.

“A solution I have seen described is to have many linked sheets in Eureka, one main (big) sheet and many smaller sheets with references to the big sheet. It is the smaller sheets that are loaded into the DTP. I have never tried out this method myself but I have been told that it does work.”

What many of you may not be aware of is that Impression not only displays the values returned by the Eureka formulae but also that Impression preserves these formulae within the ‘graphic’. As a consequence of this, when the ‘graphic’ from Impression is returned (via the OLE command) to Eureka the sheet is still ‘live’; the content of the cells are formulae and not values. This is so even if you have destroyed the original Eureka sheet and switched off the machine in the interim. Let me repeat that in Impression both the

values (which are displayed) and the formulae are retained and can be returned to Eureka via OLE. Of course, you must not destroy the 'big sheet' to which these references refer.

In Conclusion

TableMate is a simple table making utility provided with Impression Style and Publisher. You can upgrade to a more recent version and those of you without any spreadsheet facilities may find that it is all you need.

Those of you who've used TableMate are filled with praise for the ease with which it allows you to enter and then modify tables for use within Impression. Those who have tried to create a table using only the features of Impression have always failed.

Next month I shall describe an alternative low priced spreadsheet package called TableCalc. If you want more features (and functions) than those provided by TableMate Designer then you might be tempted by it.

Finally

You can contact me at the Abacus Training address shown in Paul's Fact File.