
Newsletter #25 (Aug 1, 2006)

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What's New

Corrected Samples

Some of the sample files for Forms, Queries and other Advance Customizations distributed with 4.0 contained bad data. We've uploaded corrections for them for you to download, so if you want to use any of the samples then you should get the corrections before importing the samples. The corrections can be found here:

http://www.Campground-Master.com/zip/corrected_samples.zip

The download is a compressed "zip" file, so if you're not using Windows XP then you'll need an unzipping program like WinZIP to open it. Once you've opened it, extract the files into the "Samples" folder (under C:\Program Files\Campground Master), replacing the files already there.

The corrected samples will also be installed automatically when you install the next version, so if you don't expect to use them for a couple months then there's no need to download these corrections.

Control ID Reference for Dialog Customization

When you're customizing an existing dialog (through the Advanced Customizations in version 4.0, by creating a Dialog definition that's an "Add-on" to an existing base dialog), you may want to move, hide, or rename one of the controls that already exist on the base dialog. To do this, you need to know the ID's of the existing controls. We've added a reference of the ID numbers for the current version, so you don't need to get them from us or use a "Spy" program to find them.

The reference can be found in the online documentation here:

<http://campgroundmaster.com/help/basedialogs.html>

The table didn't come out looking as good as we'd hoped in the online version, but it has the necessary information.

Q & A

Printing in Landscape Orientation

Q: Is there a way that I can change the page orientation to landscape for reports? I tried change it in the print screen, but then it doesn't print all of the pages.

A: If you change the orientation after the preview then it doesn't know that the number of pages required for the report might change -- so the trick is to change the default orientation so the preview will also be in landscape mode. Go to File / Printer Setup / Default (grid-type-reports), and set the orientation to landscape there. Now it will print as desired.

By the way, this is also where you can select different printers to use as defaults for various printing tasks, and set other preferences. Note that these settings only affect Campground Master, not other programs. However it must be done on each computer separately (e.g. if you're networked).

Sorting Waiting Lists by Date Added

Q: For our waiting list, how can we sort by date added? We want to give preference to the people that have been on the list the longest.

A: On the Non-Reserved tab view, click the Options button. Check the boxes for Date Made and Time Made to show those fields, and click Save. Then you can sort by clicking on the Date Made column header.

Keeping Reservation Notes separate from Customer Notes

Q: Lots of times we want notes on the reservation screen for just that one reservation and not on the customer screen. When we type it on the reservation screen only, it still appears on the customer screen most of the time.

A: If you type in notes when *making* the reservation (in the New Reservation dialog), they are copied into the Customer's notes as you say. However if you go back later into Reservation Details (or for instance click "Continue to Details" on the New Reservation dialog), then you can edit the notes there without it affecting the Customer's notes.

Seeing/adding auto-charges for all future reservations

Q: Is there a way to do a bulk Auto Calculate for all of the reservations that were already put in the system other than going into each reservation and doing it manually?

A: There isn't a way to actually add the auto-calculated charges for all reservations at once. However if you just want to see the auto-calculated amounts (e.g. to make sure your rates are working), you can select the "Auto-charges" column for the On Site tab view (through the Options button). This does the auto-calculate for each one and shows the amount without actually adding the charges. However you may not want to leave this field enabled all the time, since it can take significant time to calculate and refresh the display.

Swapping sites when nothing is available

Q: We want to change reservations around (switch two people's sites) which we normally do by moving one to an empty site first, moving the second one to the first site, then moving the first one back to the second site. But we're completely full so I can't find an empty site to use as a temporary holding place. How can I swap them?

A: Go to Assign or Change Site for the first one as usual, and make sure "Show Available" is *not* checked so you can see the other reservation you're wanting to swap with. Right-click on that reservation and select "Swap sites with this reservation".

If for some reason that would create a conflict (e.g. one is longer than the other so you have to move two people out of the way first), then you could "remove" one temporarily using a one of these more indirect methods -- either make it unassigned (Assign/Change site but don't select a new site), or change the status to "Can't book" (then you'll need to locate it again later using Find Reservation or the Non-Reserved tab view).

Tips & Techniques

Receipts by Category report adjustments

We get a lot of questions about the amounts reported in the "Receipts by Category" report. Sometimes the amounts in a particular category don't seem correct (e.g. a payment amount doesn't go into the category as expected), or an amount appears in "Uncategorized" and it's not clear why.

Since this report uses "interpolated" amounts rather than raw transaction amounts, it will divide a payment proportionally into the Charge categories that need to be "paid", or accounted for, at the time of payment. When a bill isn't paid in full, e.g. for long-term guests, this can cause confusion. The other primary issue is when payments are entered before the charges to be paid, so that at the time of payment there are no categories to put the payment into (causing "Uncategorized" amounts).

Here are a few tips on resolving or at least understanding these issues...

The first thing to do when you see something unexpected in the report is to uncheck the "Summarize" box at the top. This will switch to Details mode and show the individual "interpolated" transactions -- e.g. a single payment may be shown as several interpolated amounts into different categories. These details are sorted by category so it should be easy to locate the problem area. To further investigate an item, you can right-click on it and select Transactions as usual to get to that reservation's transaction details. Here you may see that a payment is out of order, or that it wasn't paid in full at some point.

If a payment is out of order, probably causing Uncategorized amounts, you can correct that easily if you have version 3.6 or later. First close the Reservation Transactions if that's still open, then right-click on the line again and go to Reservation Details. From there click on Transaction History. Select the payment and use the Move Up or Move Down buttons to put it in the right place (usually at the bottom, or at least below any Charges that it's paying for). Note that this doesn't change the dates so it won't affect reporting by dates -- it will only affect the distribution of the payment in the Receipts by Category report.

By the way, if you normally receive a payment before charges can be added, e.g. before they arrive, then that really should be entered as a Deposit. Once charges are added, then the money is "moved" from Deposits to the appropriate categories (this is one purpose of the "Dep Applied" transactions you see added automatically).

Assigning specific categories to a payment...

Sometimes you may receive a payment that you want to put in a specific category (or categories) instead of letting the program split it up. For instance if the customer has a \$50 balance due for rent, then you add an electric charge of \$50 and they pay only the \$50 for electric, the program would normally split the payment into \$25 rent and \$25 electric.

The only way to change this distribution is to use the new feature in version 4.0 to assign categories to Payments. Once you have version 4.0 installed, you still need to enable this feature -- go to Maintenance / Program Options / Prompts, and check the box "Allow transaction categories to be selected for payments" (and click OK).

Now when you enter a payment, it will allow you to assign one or more categories to it. You can also correct previous payments -- as in the example above, right-click on the transaction in the details list and select Transactions to get to the Reservation Transactions dialog. Click on the Payment transaction to be categorized, and a button "Edit Category Allocation" will appear at the bottom. Click that button and add one or more categories as needed.

Hopefully these tips will help you understand and correct any discrepancies in the reports.

Restoring from an old backup on purpose

There may be a time when you actually want to restore an older backup -- for instance if you made a bunch of major changes just for testing (or you goofed), and you want to restore the database to its previous state. Normally when you restore the data, it asks if you want to re-apply the changes again from the log (or worse yet, it gets them automatically from the network).

Here's how you can keep them from coming back (and keep it from asking to apply changes):

Since you're going backwards it normally assumes you want to get up to date (e.g. you restored from an older backup and so it wants to recover the changes since then also). It's actually getting them from the log files, which are also on each computer if you're networked, but since each client also has a "newer" database than you want then you would have to wipe that out too.

The only way to go backwards with a restore is:

1. Delete all log files from *each* computer (the log files have a PRKLOG extension, and are located in the same folder as the database file -- so delete *.prklog).
2. Restore the old database using Maintenance / Restore. If you're networking, restore to the Master workstation first. It won't be able to refresh from the clients now that all of the logs are deleted.
3. Also if you're networking, go to *each* client and do Maintenance / Network Functions / Request a full database refresh -- this copies the whole database from the server to each client, wiping out the "newer" version they had).

Adding a column to the Rack View

With the new customizations in version 4.0, one of the things you can do easily is add another column to the Rack view. For instance, you might like to show the site's length, or Site Class, or whether it has 50A service. You can actually add as many columns as you want, but of course this reduces the amount of space for showing the dates in the Rack.

Here is an example of adding the Site Class field -- other Site fields can be added the same way.

1. Go to Maintenance /Advanced Customizations / Queries.
2. Click Add Query, and select List Query.
3. Enter a name, such as "Rack Columns"
4. Select "Sites" for the Base table.
5. Click "Quick-Add Fields"
6. Select the "Site Class" field in the Data Field column, and click the left-arrow button (or you can just double-click the Site Class field). You should see it appear under Fields Selected as "Campsites:Attrib_Site_Use".
7. Click Done, and you'll see it in the Query Columns table.
8. Just to make it neater, select the line in the list ("Site Class") and click Edit Column, then change the Column Heading to just "Class", and select "Center" for the Align Text option. Click Save / Close all the way out.
9. Click the Options button on the Rack, and in the list "Query to insert with additional site info" select the

query name you just added.

Now you should see the extra column for Class in the Rack view. If you want more columns, just edit the Query to add additional fields.

Adding fields to the Payments Due tab view

Adding fields to other tab views is similar to adding the column in the Rack view (covered in the previous topic). The only difference is that a different Base Table is needed -- for the Transactions tab view the base table of the added Query must be Transactions, and for all other tab views it must be Reservations.

Here is an example of adding the Paid-Thru date to the Arrivals tab view.

1. Go to Maintenance /Advanced Customizations / Queries.
2. Click Add Query, and select List Query.
3. Enter a name, such as "Arrivals Extra"
4. Select "Reservations" for the Base table.
5. Click "Quick-Add Fields"
6. Select the "Paid Thru" field in the Data Field column, and click the left-arrow button (or you can just double-click the Paid Thru field). You should see it appear under Fields Selected as "Reservations:Resv_Paid_Thru".
7. Click Done, and you'll see it in the Query Columns table.
8. Just to make it neater, select the line in the list ("Paid Thru") and click Edit Column, select "Center" for the Align Text option. Click Save / Close all the way out of Query Setup.
9. Click the Options button on the Arrivals tab view, and in the list "Query to insert with additional info" select the query name you just added.

Now you should see the extra column at the far right. If you want more columns, just edit the Query to add additional fields. While there isn't a way to insert columns to a specific place, you can achieve the same thing by removing some of the checked "Fields to show" under the Options and just include them in your query instead.