SOFTWARE REVIEWS

QuicKey
Trace Center, 1500 Highland Ave., Madison, WI 53705-2280, telephone: 608-262-6966. Version 2.2. Reviewed for use with IBM-PC family. 5¼" disk. Version 2.3 will be available at $35.00. Not copy-protected; however, for support user original must be bought.

QuicKey is a background abbreviation program used simultaneously with the DOS. It allows the word processor user to enter as few as one or two letters and have the whole word or phrase appear on the screen. One advantage of this program is that it increases input speed for word processing tasks because frequently used words do not have to be typed repeatedly. Almost any abbreviation the user desires can be used; however, there are some limitations as to which keys can be used. Although the disk comes with a few predetermined, stored abbreviations for some frequently used words, the user can easily change or delete this list and include his or her own abbreviations. QuicKey can be programmed to either automatically change the abbreviation into the desired word or to wait until a special key is hit and then change the abbreviation into the desired word.

QuicKey will store over 1000 abbreviations, provided the average length of the expansion word is not over 16 characters. When a particular topic is discussed, the user can activate the file that contains words specific to that topic. Faster access is achieved by grouping words into smaller files. Additional features of QuicKey include (a) the program keeps track of how often each abbreviation is used, (b) the delay factor for entering keystrokes can be changed, and (c) alternative input devices (e.g., Morse code or headpointing devices) can be used to enter keystrokes. Most alternative input methods that work with standard commercial application programs will work with QuicKey.

The program comes with one disk, which can be backed up, and an easy-to-read manual. The manual is divided into four sections: tutorial, beginning use of QuicKey, intermediate use, and advanced use.

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Job Readiness Series

This four-program series can help a person develop the skills necessary to gain employment. The package includes programs to assess and improve job-related attitudes, understand the steps of successful interviewing, properly complete a job application, and design a resume.

The reading level is for Grades 3 through 4. The interest level is from Grade 9 to adult. The complete four-program series includes four disks, with back-up disks and instructional guides. Each instructional guide contains the following content areas: program description, specific goals and objectives, program content, prerequisites, skills, concepts, and vocabulary, teaching strategies, evaluation strategies, hardware usage, and references.

The first program, Job Attitudes, Assessment and Improvement, is designed to help people become better prepared for employment and to improve their performance and attitudes of primary importance to job success: confidence, cooperation, motivation, and responsibility. A pretest, with optional printout, directs the individual to segments where he or she may need to work. A posttest reinforces what has been learned.

The second program, Successful Job Interviewing, discusses how to prepare for interviews, problems encountered during the process, ways to handle tough questions, and how to follow up the interview to maximize the chances of becoming employed.

Two strengths of this particular program are that it reviews questions that are against the law for employers to ask, and it encourages writing a thank-you note after an interview.

The third program, Filling Out Job Applications, takes the user through the process of filling out a job application form. Each component of a typical application form is discussed and appropriate answers are given. The user’s responses are continually stored and a sample printout of the application is provided at the end.

The fourth and final program, Resumes Made Easy, covers what a resume is, how a resume is prepared, what to include in a resume, and the two most common types of resumes—functional and chronological. A printout of the user’s completed resume is provided.

Although a monochrome monitor would be adequate for running these programs, a color monitor is strongly recommended because the program’s color graphics are very good. Many positive reinforcements and encouragement are provided to the users throughout the various programs.

One drawback to the programs is that at various times the user will be asked for specific responses to questions; yet, no feedback is provided to these specific answers. In addition, as with all software programs, the patient–therapist interaction still needs to occur. Specific feedback must be provided to patients on their completed job application and resume because the programs do not evaluate content.

I use these programs with adolescents and young adults on an acute inpatient psychiatric unit. The programs are beneficial to patients being provided with occupational counseling.

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Editor's Note. We encourage your participation in this department. Guidelines for doing software reviews can be obtained from the Software Review Editor at AOTA.

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