☐ ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book will allow you to become familiar with the main features of dBASE III PLUS. You will learn how to manipulate the information stored in a database file, display that information in a meaningful way using a report and create your own database files. The disk that accompanies this book contains several specimen databases for you to use and these will be referred to regularly throughout the text. The book is divided up into a number of lessons, each with its objectives clearly stated at the beginning and with a summary of the topics covered at the end. This means that you can, if you already have some knowledge of the program, pick up the points you need to learn at a clearly defined point. When you have finished this book you will be ready to continue your studies with the companion to it that takes you into the study of the dBASE III PLUS programming language so that you will be able to produce customised programs to help you in your use of database information.

The first four lessons introduce you to some of the simplest dBASE III PLUS commands which you will learn to use on one of the databases supplied on your practice disk. Lesson Five teaches you how you can create a database of your own and is followed by a practice lesson to consolidate what you have learned so far. The remaining lessons introduce you to more features of the program including the creation of customised screens and reports.

Most of the lessons in this book guide you through the use of dBASE III PLUS by using the dBASE III PLUS **ASSISTANT**. This is a supplied feature that helps you to create commands by choosing from menus. The **ASSISTANT** can be switched off if required and commands keyed in. You will have to do this occasionally in this book and in every lesson in the companion volume.

When you have completed your studies in these books you will be in a position to progress to produce more and more sophisticated database programs and you will be able to use the manual supplied with the program more efficiently. It is true to say that very few people use more that about 25 per cent of any computer program they buy. What you need is a thorough knowledge of the basics of a program so that you can then proceed to go off into the jungle of that portion of the program that satisfies your particular requirements, happy in the knowledge that you can face the more sophisticated sections with confidence.

A practice disk is available for this book which covers both parts of the *Easily into dBASE III PLUS* course. As you will have to modify the databases supplied on that disk and add extra files we suggest that you make your own copy of the disk before embarking on the course. For information regarding the copying of files you should consult *Easily into DOS*.

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