

PineSoft Newsletter : January 2000

Millennium Edition (July 1999 V2.3b update)

Automatic display of Training duration calculated from Start and Finish fields in Student Placement Forms. Use PineSoft Filter by Form option in Main Placement form to easily check for any shortfalls.

Microsoft update patches applied to 16 bit and 32 bit versions - all versions now interpret 2 digit years from 00 to 29 as 2000 to 2029. 30 to 99 interpreted as 1930 to 1999.

Millennium Edition (March 1999 V2.3a)

Versions 2.2/2.3 represent a significant upgrade to the application as detailed below. Due to the new fields added to the database existing users of the application need to have their "pinedat.mdb" data file updated by PineSoft.

The Millennium Edition is available as a 16 bit application which supports all Windows versions, 3.1 to NT, or a 32 bit version for Windows 95 or above. The versions are almost identical and share the same Millennium Edition User Manual, however, the 16 bit version is one third the size of the 32 bit version and runs faster on all PC's. A 486 PC with 8MB of RAM under Windows 3.1 is sufficient to run the 16 bit version, whereas a Pentium PC with 32MB of RAM is required for the 32 bit version.

The additional features in the 32 bit version include a spell checker, the display of Help Text when you pass over PineSoft buttons with your mouse, an improved attachment manager for Network users and the ability to control the default "edit or read-only" behaviour of database forms. The 32 bit version also has direct E-mail and appointment links to Microsoft Outlook - users need to have Outlook 97 or 98 installed on their PC to make use of this feature. In the medium term I propose to keep to 16 bit versions of users data tables as this will enable their use with either 16 bit or 32 bit application software.

In the short term I expect most users to stick with the 16 bit version which will continue to be supplied on floppy disks. Users with the necessary hardware may like to try the 32 bit version on their University Networks. The 32 bit version will be supplied on a CD. Alternatively, as users data file (pinedat.mdb) will require updating you could return it to PineSoft on a 100MB Zip Disk, and I will return your updated data file, 16 bit and 32 bit versions on the Zip disk.

(1) Revised Screen Display

A "classic grey" screen display has been implemented in the 16 bit and 32 bit versions of the Millennium Edition. A 16 bit (64,000) colour depth is required for the intended smooth grey shading of database forms. SVGA 800 x 600 or higher screen resolution is recommended. A new set-up option enables users to define the default screen behaviour to display forms in centred windows or full screen.

(2) New "Task" Pop-up's

Three new "Task" Pop-up forms added for Company, Student and Placement records. These enable users to define their own tasks, such as the return of Reports, Placement Visits, Student Projects, Company Consultancies etc. and to record task completion with date and comment options.

(3) Integrated Use of Placement : Required and Placed Fields

Users will need to set the "required" flag in the student records of all students requiring a placement. Only flagged students will appear in the student drop-down list in the applications pop-up or Placement Add options. In the Applications Pop-up's you may record whether an offer is made and whether it is accepted by the student. When you "place" a student via the "Add new placement" options, the required flag will automatically be turned off and the placed flag turned on. As students are placed the required list will decrease (hopefully to zero) and the placed list will increase. Use the PineSoft Filter by Form option to check on the current position or use the new Student : Placements Required/Placed report for a hard copy.

(4) New Student Pop-up in Company Form

While browsing through company records you may, if required, display a student pop-up form to check on pertinent student details, without having to navigate via the Main Menu. This student pop-up may be minimised to the task bar if necessary.