

FileMaker Pro: The View from Information Services

An IDC White Paper

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Executive Summary

FileMaker Pro stands alone in the desktop database market as the leading desktop database sold outside of an office suite.¹ This fact reflects its unique selling proposition as an easy-to-use, easily programmed, cross-platform database solution. Through past end-user interviews, IDC has seen how this mixture has particular appeal and success within workgroups and departments for the development of line-of-business solutions. In this most recent set of customer interviews, IDC has further seen how these same qualifications also suit the requirements of Information Services (IS) for a powerful, flexible solution for end-user enablement.

This acceptance by IS, however, presents a new set of challenges to FileMaker Inc. Ten in-depth conversations with IS representatives reveal FileMaker Pro's role as a deployable end-user tool. Whether IS acts as a consultant to the end user community or as the developer, FileMaker Pro provides a means for IS to enable end-user self service. This use by IS also means that the upper limits of FileMaker Pro's capabilities are tested and pushed. Satisfying the demands of IS in terms of robustness, speed, and performance — while maintaining FileMaker Pro's heralded end-user ease-of-use — will be FileMaker Inc.'s biggest long term challenge.

Introduction

In 1996, IDC conducted interviews with seven sites utilizing the various FileMaker Pro products. The findings from this research revealed FileMaker Pro's popularity and strength in departments and workgroups as an easy-to-use, low-cost end-user database capable of a myriad of employments. The uses of FileMaker Pro at these sites included application development, prototyping, and data access. FileMaker Pro was found to be uniquely suited for organizations that require an easy-to-use development product to build business-critical or line-of-business solutions for the mixed Windows/Macintosh environment. The ease-of-use requirement was perhaps the most critical to the product selection, as a majority of the solutions were built outside the auspices of IS with development executed by one individual.²

Now, two years later, IDC has conducted a second set of interviews of ten FileMaker customers. This

¹ According to IDC's Worldwide Desktop Database Market Review and Forecast, 1997-2002, (IDC #15705, April 1998), for FileMaker Pro's combined Windows and Macintosh unit shipments.

² These findings were published in a white paper entitled FileMaker Pro: Successful Solutions for Departments and Workgroups.

two-year interval, occurring between October 1996 and October 1998, represents a critical period in modern computing history. Two issues now weigh heavily on the minds of IS and business professionals: Y2K and the Internet. Little can be discussed that occurs within the business/technology environment without taking into account these issues. Although Y2K represents a potentially serious negative impact on the business, the Internet represents a wealth of potential. Whether positive or negative, each of these issues requires careful planning and control.

Given these weighty issues, what has become of the issues of old — issues revolving around the corporate desktop, application standardization, and connectivity? Purely and simply, the desktop environment has matured and desktop applications have become a commodity. Microsoft Office holds more than 90% of the office suite shipment market.

How has FileMaker kept pace within this environment? Can it and has it responded to the changed demands of a world now operating on “Internet time” and consumed by Y2K? If Microsoft Office is the corporate standard, what role does a database from a competing applications company have to play?

In the course of the interviews with FileMaker Pro users, IDC has found that FileMaker Pro does enjoy the position of standard or co-standard in many Microsoft Office standardized environments (sometimes coexisting with Access). Its cross-platform, ease-of-use, low-cost development attributes continue to sell the product for line-of-business, workgroup, and department solutions, and its cross-platform availability is critical to a standardized environment solution.

Additionally, from the IS perspective, FileMaker Pro is one application that can be deployed to enable employee self-service through its easy but powerful programming. This is particularly true for workgroup-level solutions. Through employee enablement, the tasks of development and maintenance can be downstreamed to the user, freeing critical IS time to focus on broader issues, such as integration and intranet solutions.

Key Findings

As was the case two years ago, FileMaker Pro continues to meet and exceed expectations as an easy-to-use, flexible, low-cost solution. Its unique role as a cross-platform, distributed product continues to set it apart from competing database solutions. Among the sites interviewed, the following trends emerged:

- Unlike the sites interviewed two years ago, the point of contact between IDC and the customer was with an individual in the IS department. IS’s role in regards to FileMaker Pro development was found to be one of two types: consultant or developer/consultant. In the sites studied, FileMaker Pro is a sanctioned application, selected for its rapid, low-cost development ability and employee self-service enablement.

- Line-of-business applications were the most important and critical applications being built with FileMaker Pro. At the workgroup level, budgeting, inventory, requisition, and scheduling applications were common line-of-business solutions profiled. Originally built to support individual departments, they most often become “enterprise” solutions.
- IS is the constituency that is rapidly moving FileMaker Pro upstream in terms of capabilities. IS is utilizing FileMaker Pro for its end-user and workgroup accessibility but is demanding the robustness and power that it requires of enterprise tools. The incorporation of ODBC in FileMaker Pro 4.1 constitutes a critical step forward in FileMaker Pro’s evolution from a strictly end-user/workgroup application to a legitimate solution for IS.

Methodology

In September and October 1998, IDC conducted interviews of ten FileMaker Inc. customers, all in the commercial sector. IDC researched the business and technical problems, the FileMaker Pro-based solutions, and the results at each installation.

Working with FileMaker Inc., IDC selected organizations based on application and sought to include installations providing the most balanced view of FileMaker Pro. From a list of more than 20 potential sites, IDC randomly selected participants. All interviews were conducted privately between an IDC interviewer and the FileMaker customer.

Although this sample is not large enough for statistically projectable trends, it provides a barometer of the value FileMaker Pro delivers to its customers.

A Changed Landscape — The View from IS

In reading this white paper, it is very important to the reader’s understanding to consider the titles of the individuals interviewed. Table 1 provides a list of the sites interviewed who agreed to have their experience published in this paper. With the exceptions of Designware and Walgreens, the individual interviewed is employed in the IT or IS department for the company for which he or she works. Although in Designware’s case, the company is inherently all-IS, because Designware is a dedicated FileMaker Pro developer. Therefore, the perspectives and viewpoints highlighted in this white paper reflect the IS orientation.

**Table 1
Summary of Participants**

Name	Industry	Company Size	Department	Title
Armco Inc.	Specialty steel	Headquarters, 5 plants, 1 research facility, 6,000 employees	IS	Senior information engineer
Designware	Custom FileMaker Pro development	2 employees	IS	President and co-founder
Frankel & Company	Marketing services	800 employees	IS	VP of information systems and technologies
Franklin Mint	Direct mail marketing	8 worldwide locations, 4,500 employees (2,000 at site studied)	IS	Developer
Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP	Law firm	14 offices, 2,000 employees	IS	Analyst
Scott Foresman	Educational publishing	Division of Pearson Plc, 500 employees at site studied	IS	User services
The Body Shop	Cosmetics	16,000 retail locations, Headquarters, 200,000 employees	IS	Desktop software engineer
Walgreens Co.	Retail drug chain	75,000 total employees	Marketing Systems and Services	Manager of marketing administration and decision support

Source: International Data Corporation, ©1999

The internal IS landscape of organizations has shifted radically and matured dramatically over the last few years. The days of evaluating four to five different word processors and spreadsheets have given way to the corporate standard of Microsoft Office. Microsoft Office currently commands more than 90% of office suites shipped into corporations. Its installed base at yearend 1998 will top 60 million. For most organizations, there is no need to reevaluate the desktop standard.

In IS, the evolution of technologies is constantly placing increased pressures on a typically limited resource. Bandwidth must be regained that can be dedicated to evaluating and implementing new technologies. Moving IS to the role of consultant and enabling employee self-service through the use of

appropriate end-user/workgroup tools is one avenue that works for the sites interviewed.

IS Provides Internal Consultancy

Steve Lane at Scott Foresman, an educational publisher, fills a role common to the organizations we interviewed. As special projects developer within the IS department, it is Steve's job to field requests from the user community for database applications. He captures the specifications and works with the user to refine the scope of the project. Depending on the interest level and expertise within the requesting department, Steve will either develop the application for the department or act as a consultant to a department-level individual who wants to participate. Because the applications that are built are customer-driven, this approach maintains user involvement and gives users control over their own solutions.

The situation is similar at The Body Shop, which is based in the United Kingdom. Alan Betts, The Body Shop's desktop software analyst, is the coordination point within IS for all FileMaker Pro users and "developers." When Betts arrived at The Body Shop five years ago, many users were struggling to accomplish database-oriented tasks within Excel. Although FileMaker Pro already existed in small pockets within the company, it was not heavily promoted nor was there heavy internal user training. IS took the lead and distributed copies of FileMaker Pro, provided access to servers, and held one- and two-day FileMaker Pro training classes. These classes covered the basics as well as a minimal level of programming.

This level of empowerment — on the end-user and departmental level — has been responsible, Betts believes, for a change in culture at The Body Shop. Betts is free to act as a troubleshooter and coordinator for FileMaker Pro activities across the company, facilitating internal sharing among users and providing leadership, while the users are in control of their solutions. Days before the IDC interview, Betts had led a meeting of FileMaker Pro administrators (not their official titles but their descriptive titles) to encourage more sharing. As a result, these administrators have created a forum as well as a bulletin board for communication and sharing.

At Frankel & Company, the marketing services company that, among other things, supports McDonald's Happy Meal promotions and movie tie-ins, IS has also returned to playing the role of consultant. Frankel & Company maintains two standards, FileMaker Pro and Microsoft Access. Although FileMaker Pro is the internal standard, IS reviews requirements and requests for databases and recommends the appropriate product. IS remains involved to ensure that databases that ultimately become business- or mission-critical are developed properly. Thus, IS cooperates with the end user on development and provides guidance.

The Benefits to IS

The above examples of IS's role in FileMaker Pro development underscore several critical selling points of FileMaker Pro: ease-of-use, easy low-cost development, and employee self-service at the workgroup level.

Frankel & Company — "FileMaker is a unique product.... [T]here is simply no other product on the market that can do what FileMaker Pro can do. It provides basic database services to an end user in much the same way that Microsoft Excel provides spreadsheet capabilities or Microsoft Word provides word processing capabilities.... At the same time, it has the sophistication to be able to grow into a...complex and sophisticated system."

Ease-of-Use Will Never Go Out of Style

When discussing FileMaker Pro with these customers, one almost becomes desensitized to the phrase “ease-of-use.” Whether in these exact words or through example, this sentiment was repeatedly expressed by those interviewed. But however often the phrase was uttered, the concept is in fact fundamental to the requirements of these IS representatives. To achieve their goal of providing a tool that enables their user set to be self-sufficient, ease-of-use is critical.

Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP (ML&B) is a good example of this requirement. ML&B is the fourth-largest law firm in the United States. Its 2,000+ employees in 14 offices worldwide are heavy users of database products to support and coordinate the data-heavy requirements of legal proceedings. At the migration point of moving from DOS- to Windows-based products, ML&B embarked on a comprehensive product evaluation to select a database standard for the organization. Unlike many FileMaker Pro sites, ML&B’s requirements do not include a cross platform requirement.

ML&B chose FileMaker Pro because of its ease-of-use, which empowers users to create their own applications. The need for relational files that can be constructed quickly and easily solidified the firm’s decision to make FileMaker Pro its desktop standard.

Among the other sites interviewed, this same sentiment was echoed loud and clear:

- **Armco Inc.** — “Ease-of-use is the most important. The cost is not a big issue; it is not that expensive.”
- **Scott Foresman** — “The ease-of-use and speed have outweighed any other issues.”
- **The Body Shop** — “You can do something very simple very quickly, or you can do something very complicated. Because of the ease-of-use, [FileMaker Pro] also gets used for things that it shouldn’t; once you get it into their heads about fields and records, they can’t think in sheets any more.”
- **Armco Inc.** — “When the users are going to create their own databases, the majority of them just jump right into FileMaker Pro because it is so easy to use.”

Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP — For a law firm, reports are the critical output format from the database. Since the move to FileMaker Pro, reports created by users have become more complex in format. "It is like seeing The Wizard of Oz, where the house landed and everything was in black and white and now we've stepped out the door and we're starting to see color."

Ease of Development

A fundamental advantage of FileMaker Pro that must be considered concurrently with its ease-of-use is the total people-power and cost required to build solutions.

Diane Senechal, Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP — "We have thousands of legal documents that need to be moved from one server to another. I'm tracking that process in FileMaker Pro. I love this software!... It makes the whole management process so much easier. In some cases, I've used it to sort out which documents need to be moved and when on banks of documents totaling 100,000 in number."

The Body Shop estimates it saved a total of 30,000 British pounds between two of FileMaker Pro applications that it built in-house. On average, these applications cost half as much as outside

development would have cost by eliminating the need to purchase additional software, hardware, and training. Further, the internal applications are more in tune with the needs of their users. In fact, the Tours Centre booking system was developed by one individual in his spare time and saved the organization 20,000 British pounds. Alan Betts described this application as a “fantastic bit of programming.”

It was commonly reported by the sites interviewed that development took, on average, less than six months for even the largest solution and typically involved only two programmers. At The Franklin Mint, the ProMax solution took six months to develop. “It’s a pretty large system if you consider it’s really running the company from start to finish. The system has approximately 60 concurrent users. There are as many as 70 or 80 users coming on and off. In size, the database is comprised of 40 files containing 1.8-2.0 gigabits of data and was developed by two programmers.”

At Frankel & Company, a majority of the FileMaker Pro projects run from weeks to months, with an emphasis on weeks. On one of the company’s more comprehensive systems, it took a matter of weeks to take the idea from concept to prototype, followed by a couple additional weeks for aesthetic interface refinement. Although most development typically involves only two people, management oversight may include a half-dozen people involved in design and development to ensure fit with departmental goals.

Employee Self-Service at the Workgroup Level

FileMaker’s illustrated ease-of-use and ease of development result in a product that enables employees to build and deploy solutions at the workgroup level with minimal involvement from IS. Table 2 highlights FileMaker Pro applications in use in some of the sites profiled; it easy to see the workgroup orientation of these solutions.

Table 2	
Sample FileMaker Pro Applications in Profiled Site	
Company	Workgroup
Frankel & Company	Corporate Purchasing System, Marketing Tracking Database, Project Issue Logs
Scott Foresman	Request and Asset System, Image Tracker
The Body Shop	The Body Shop Direct (direct sales system) Research and Development Database
Walgreens Co.	Seasonal Sales Reporting System Store Location Database Monthly Store Profit & Loss Store Opening Schedule

Source: International Data Corporation, ©1999

As Steve Lane at Scott Foresman pointed out, “There aren’t too many people who are building things that just get used on their desktops. Generally speaking, the systems that people want or the databases that people want are usually the ones that they want to share.”

Typically, the individual “users” whom IS staff members meet with in their role as consultants are the departmental “consultants” who are spearheading departmental solutions. Therefore, for those sites

interviewed, the word “user” is most synonymous with representative.”

FileMaker Pro and Its Alternatives

The fact that IDC spoke almost exclusively to IS representatives in the course of interviewing for this project is further reflected in the alternatives that this group considers for their solutions. In the first study (two years ago), the department and workgroup managers considered a host of options for accomplishing their projects. These options included costly outsourced development, internal IS services, and other desktop applications. The perspective of IS is dramatically different from the perspective of a line-of-business manager. The products that IS considers for projects are very different from those that a line-of-business manager would consider. Consequently, FileMaker Pro is being compared against very formidable competition.

- The Franklin Mint — “We conducted an extensive comparison between FileMaker Pro and a leading application development language. The net result revealed a significant times savings in development using FileMaker Pro and a \$230,000 solution versus a \$600,000 solution.”
- Frankel & Company — “You buy FileMaker Pro \$200-300 at a time, and you buy Notes at \$200,000-300,000 at a time. I’ll spend an extra couple thousand dollars in FileMaker Pro to see if it will work. I’m not going to spend \$200,000 to find out whether Notes is what we need.”
- Frankel & Company — “We can do it for \$25,000 in FileMaker Pro or \$215,000 in Informix.”

On the desktop, the only direct competition that FileMaker Pro now seems to experience is from Microsoft Access. However, the experience with and perception of Access by those interviewed is that its requirements for “true programming” knowledge, and the ultimate end result of programming in Visual Basic and migrating to SQL Server, make it too complex for many sites seeking to provide true end-user self-service.

Line-of-Business vs. Mission-Critical Solutions

As was found in the initial study, FileMaker Pro is often utilized at the departmental and workgroup level to build line-of-business solutions. In the group surveyed for this study, this finding remains true. The primary difference between these two groups is the level of involvement or knowledge IS has of these solutions. In the first group studied, line-of-business managers contracted with third parties to have their applications built. In the second group, IS has or has had involvement either in the design, building, or maintenance of these applications — they are part of a complex solutions framework for the organization. For our first subject group, these applications were clandestine solutions.

Several of the individuals interviewed wrestled with the terms “mission-critical” and “enterprise.” At what point does a solution become “enterprise”? How is “mission-critical” determined? Is it by virtue of size? As one site pointed out, it is not a megabyte issue. It is determined by who accesses the solution and for what purpose. At Frankel & Company, of 800 employees, only 50 have access to the purchasing system, yet it is considered a core, mission-critical system. At the Franklin Mint, the ProMax solution runs the entire product and promotional side of the business.

The Need for Integration and the Intranet

In addition to the line-of-business solutions found at the sites studied, IDC also observed a trend toward tapping corporate data stores using FileMaker Pro and toward using intranet solutions.

Connection to Data Stores

Scott Foresman is moving to the next level of integration as it develops FileMaker Pro systems that address business practices across two or three groups. The company's current system is used by purchasing, finance, shipping, and user services to track all hardware assets. This system's data are leveraged into the corporate budgeting process.

At The Franklin Mint, the ProMax solution feeds to and from the mainframe systems for accountability.

At Frankel & Company, the need is not restricted to ODBC connection; there is a general requirement to connect to the corporate data environment, which includes Informix and SQL Server.

Intranet Uses

Walgreens and Frankel & Company have employed FileMaker Pro as a back-end database accessed via the corporate intranet using a browser. The advantages of this use are numerous: (1) ease of training, (2) cost reduction, (3) universal interface, (4) centralized management of data, and (5) speed.

Walgreens was able to achieve many efficiencies by taking advantage of the fact that its employees have Web access. For one solution that tracks store openings, three individuals around the company input data. Rather than e-mailing the data, this application was moved to the corporate intranet, enabling input through a Web browser. Walgreens also maintains other corporate intranet databases that provide quick and easy access to its employees. From the user perspective, access involves merely clicking on buttons on the Web page; in actuality, however, users are receiving data from back-end FileMaker Pro databases. For the most part, these databases have been developed by end users at Walgreens. At the point that it becomes an intranet solution, more skilled staff become involved, although, still outside the bounds of IS.

The Franklin Mint has successfully tested migrating dedicated FileMaker Pro access lines to an intranet solution. By Web-enabling a few screens, a function that used to take 10 minutes over a dedicated line now takes 10 seconds with the Web interface. Although not in production at this time, the groundwork has been laid for global connectivity to remote offices.

Interestingly, at Frankel & Company, the move to browser database access is not a cost-motivated decision. Although access through a Web browser means that no resident local copy of FileMaker Pro is required, representing a cost savings, Frankel was looking to save hard disk space. By removing the application from the desktop, the company frees hard disk space and reduces the need for training.

Old and New Challenges

Out with the Old

When IDC last examined the use of FileMaker Pro in organizations, we determined that the product faced three distinct challenges:

- Addressing the Chinese Wall between Windows and Macintosh users
- Gaining visibility throughout the enterprise
- Demonstrating its ability to compete with Microsoft database offerings

In the sites interviewed for this study, IDC found that FileMaker Pro is successfully meeting these challenges. The product was found in all-Windows environments as well as in the traditional cross-platform environments. FileMaker Pro's Windows unit shipments now exceed its Macintosh unit shipments.

It is obvious from this second study that FileMaker Pro's profile within organizations has definitely risen above the departmental level to capture the attention of IS. Among the sites interviewed, FileMaker Pro provided benefits that other databases could not. (Of the sites interviewed, half were Microsoft Office standardized environments.)

Stepping Up to The Bar — Meeting IS's Requirements

What new challenges for FileMaker Pro have emerged? The product's success with the IS constituency is actually a double-edged sword. The incorporation of relational capabilities, the addition of a server edition, and, most recently, the addition of ODBC capabilities mean that FileMaker Pro receives the required check marks to pass through to the IS department. However, now that it is in, IS and corporate programmers want more. The following issues are at the forefront of IS requirements:

- Increased robustness
- Increased speed
- Maintenance/documentation tools

Power/Robustness

For those interviewed, the issues relating to power and robustness center on the number of concurrent users supported by FileMaker Pro. As was discussed, many of the sites interviewed have taken line-of-business departmental solutions and rolled them out to the entire site or corporate entity. In so doing, these sites are pushing FileMaker Pro Server's 100-concurrent-users restriction. Again, it is important to remember the mind set of those interviewed; they are IS employees who are treating FileMaker Pro like any other tool.

Several of the sites interviewed reported acceptable performance within the confines of FileMaker Pro's 100-concurrent-users parameter. The Franklin Mint's ProMax solution, which was originally intended for use by one department, ultimately became a corporate solution with 200 users. The system typically has 60 concurrent users at any one time, with between 70 and 80 users logging on and off.

At Frankel & Company, the purchasing system written in FileMaker Pro has approximately 60 users of its database. Response time has not been a problem.

Speed

Speed issues came into play at the sites profiled as the size of the total application increased. For many of sites, acceptable speed performance was realized by breaking the application into many databases.

Applications comprising 40 or more databases were common.

Maintenance and Documentation

Once application solutions come under the purview of IS or increase in size or dependency among their corporate users, the requirement for documentation and maintenance emerges. Although some sites believe FileMaker Pro's inherent ease-of-use and programming make maintenance simple and documentation unnecessary, other sites believe the opposite. As solutions become more complex and the number of input points increase, they become much greater than one person can maintain or train others to maintain.

Programmer and corporate programmer support requirements go hand-in-hand with maintenance and documentation requirements. Although FileMaker Inc. maintains the FileMaker Solutions Alliance for third-party developers, it does not have a program targeted at corporate programmers. Those in internal development do not see themselves as either standard end users or alliance members, and they expressed frustration when interviewed because FileMaker Pro documentation is targeted at programmers or "power users."

Maintaining Ease-of-Use — Meeting End-User Requirements

It will indeed be a challenge for FileMaker Inc. to satisfy the newer IS requirements for its product while maintaining its heritage with the end-user populations.

As Creag Banta of Frankel & Company stated, "I think the most important single thing that FileMaker has to do is to maintain the end user accessibility, because if they ever lose that, they're gone."

He further succinctly summarized the demanding position in which FileMaker Inc. now finds itself.

"The biggest challenge FileMaker has is 'Can they add the capabilities to have multilevel relations and true ODBC- or SQL-type access to SQL databases — and at the same time still allow users to create simple project databases by point-and-click?'"

Thus, FileMaker Pro's foremost challenge is one that FileMaker Inc. never intended: competing with industrial-weight, enterprise-quality, programmable databases while maintaining end-user ease-of-use and programming.

Company Profiles

Armco Inc. — Specialty Steel

Company size: 6,000 employees

Corporate infrastructure: Oracle, RDB

Sample FileMaker Pro applications:

Appropriation Request System — Used to request capital funds expenditures, this application was written by the controlling department and is a server-based system maintained by that department.

Maintenance Scheduling System — This database is used to track the maintenance of equipment in all the operating units of the company's Butler, Pennsylvania, plant.

Summary: FileMaker Pro is the standard database at this company for both individual and

shared solutions. It is the database sanctioned by IS, and funding for FileMaker Pro software is provided by the IS department. Use of FileMaker Pro at Armco ranges from individual applications to the plant- and corporate-level solutions highlighted above. Users range from expert to novice and include hourly and salaried employees. This historically 50/50 mixed Macintosh/Windows company is migrating to an exclusively PC-based environment. FileMaker Pro's multiplatform support and upgrade policy are key to this migration. The server environment will also migrate from Apple to NT.

Frankel & Company — Marketing Services Agency

Company size: 800 total employees; 700 at site profiled

Corporate infrastructure: Informix, Peoplesoft

Sample FileMaker Pro applications:

Corporate Purchasing System — This FileMaker Pro solution comprises 40 related files that include inventory, receiving, and purchasing. The solution is used for capital budgeting, expense budgeting, and budget reconciliation. What was once an ad-hoc system has grown into a mature system that is managed by an outside consulting organization in conjunction with inside personnel. The organization is currently working on connecting the system to the company's Informix database.

Marketing Tracking Database — This database is run by events marketing; it tracks all new Hollywood tie-in programs and contains lists of all movies to be released over the next two years.

Project Issue Logs — This is an intranet-based database. What was once only accessible to project managers is now available to all members of the project team. The database is tied to Microsoft Project so the entire project can be reconciled and a centralized record can be created.

Summary: For Frankel & Company, FileMaker Pro provides the perfect tool for building end-user-deployable applications that may or not be enterprisewide. However, the scalability of the product IS the flexibility to extend any application to the broader organization if necessary. Frankel is considering now the likely connectivity and access requirements of its systems as they grow and mature. For Frankel, the addition of ODBC to FileMaker Pro is a strong move toward ensuring that the product will be able to mature with the needs of the organization.

Franklin Mint — Direct Marketing Company

Company size: Eight offices worldwide, total number employees is 4,500 with approximately 2,000 employees at site interviewed.

Corporate infrastructure: DB2

Desktop standards: Microsoft Office, FileMaker Pro

Premier FileMaker Pro application:

ProMax — This master scheduling and tracking system was rewritten from a mainframe solution. Its cross-platform access serves 200 corporate users. The solution touches almost all departments, including concept, master scheduling, design, development, tooling, advertising, photography, shipping, and sales and marketing. FileMaker Pro's success in the company's Prepress department precipitated its adoption enterprisewide by IS.

Summary: The ProMax database is the Franklin Mint's single most important application. Its co-creator, Chris O'Connor, stated, "FileMaker has become so integrated in daily use

that I don't know if the company could live without it." Its inception as a workgroup-specific application, its move to IS, and the fact that the principals of the company are members of its development team bear testimony to the contribution that this application makes to the company and the ability of FileMaker Pro to scale up to meet the demands of IS.

Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP — Law Firm

Company size: 14 offices worldwide; employee count of approximately 2,000 (approximately 600 at site profiled (Philadelphia))

Sample FileMaker Pro applications:

Rolodex — This application was built by IS and provided to all employees to manage their contacts. It was designed so that users could share the data as desired. After their DOS-based WordPerfect Office Rolodexes were converted to the new FileMaker organizer, ML&B users were able to create fax forms, utilize mail merges, use stored e-mail addresses, and download data to their Palm Pilots. These were all new features that were in high demand by the users. This approach allowed for a more customized solution at a cost substantially lower than that of an out-of-the-box solution.

Average Use by Lawyers: All firm lawyers are equipped with FileMaker Pro on their laptops, which accompany them to court. FileMaker Pro is also provided on the laptops used in war rooms by paralegals. FileMaker databases are used to track the hundreds of documents submitted for legal proceedings, exhibit lists, document productions, witness reports, case indexes, and interrogatories.

Summary: Originally a DOS-based shop, ML&B conducted a comprehensive product evaluation of Windows databases when it came time to migrate. Although FileMaker Pro was relatively unknown to the firm, it came out way ahead of the pack. At ML&B, it is difficult to point to one stand-out application in FileMaker Pro. Approximately 80% of the organization is trained in FileMaker Pro. IS supplied templates to enable users to create new databases, make modifications, and be up and running within a half-hour. As Diane Senechal, an analyst at ML&B, describes it, "FileMaker databases have sprung up all over." The total estimated number of FileMaker Pro databases firmwide is approximately 6,000.

Scott Foresman — Educational Publisher

Company size: Scott Foresman is a division of Addison Wesley Publishing, which is a division of Pearson Plc. The total number of employees at this site is approximately 500.

Corporate infrastructure: Sybase, Oracle, Informix

Sample FileMaker Pro applications:

Request and Asset System — This system is utilized by purchasing, finance, shipping, and customer service. It currently tracks all hardware assets and maintenance calls. It is being revised to include purchasing information to enable budgeting.

Image Tracker — This system is in development to track the ordering and licensing of all art used in the books published. It is intended to track ordering of art, invoicing, and agreements with illustrators.

Spelling System — This database is currently being converted to FileMaker Pro from Helix. Based on research conducted many years ago on children's spelling patterns and mistakes, the data are categorized to predict potential spelling mistakes and will be used to write a new series of spelling text books.

Summary: At Scott Foresman, FileMaker Pro databases range along a complexity continuum from a few standalone to-do lists to multiuser, multidepartment, project-based systems. Due to the nature of book publishing, workgroups are created based on book projects. Although these projects and workgroups may be book-specific, they incorporate many of the same internal resources or collect data that are leveragable by other project groups. FileMaker Pro's ease of development and ease of use enable databases to be written quickly for specific project needs. At the same time, FileMaker Pro's portability and server technology enables these same databases to easily be made available to other project groups. As book-specific projects are completed, these databases may become relatively inactive on a daily basis but continue to play a role as information repositories. As projects are revisited or books reprinted, these databases provide time-saving data. Because IS is involved with the FileMaker Pro user community and the databases created, it can track and manage these important information repositories and make them available to the appropriate user base.

The Body Shop — International Cosmetics Company

Company size: More than 1,600 retail locations and corporate and manufacturing facility in Littlehampton, England; approximately 2,000 corporate employees (skilled and unskilled)

Corporate infrastructure: Oracle C2000 database for main business systems

Sample FileMaker Pro applications:

International Shipping System — This system prints labels, computes weights and freights, tracks numbers of barrels and pallets, and tracks destinations.

The Body Shop Direct — This direct sales system is in the pilot stage but is live and available for use during development. This database tracks consulting work and is accessible to all employees.

The Tours Centre Booking System — The Body Shop offers daily tours of its manufacturing facility. This database is used to book and track tour availability.

Art Work Tracking System — This database tracks corporate brand art work to be used in catalogs, publications, and packaging. The corporate brand image collection is stored in Acrobat image format, and the Acrobat file is stored in the FileMaker database.

International Franchisee Meetings Database — This database is used to book hotels and related items for franchisee meetings. It ties into the master franchisee list, enabling FileMaker to maintain one list.

Research and Development Database — This database houses research notes and regulatory and legislative information, organized by country, pertaining to disclosure and ingredient laws. It ties into the mainframe system that maintains poisons information.

Summary: FileMaker Pro's ease-of-use, programmability, and server technologies have given The Body Shop the tool to enable its end users. In this way, IS is free to focus on integration and broader corporate technology/business issues. The next stage of evolution for The Body Shop will be to provide access to these line-of-business, cross-functional databases via the Web and to enable users to more effectively access mainframe data. FileMaker Pro training has been so successful at The Body Shop that classes are always full and IS is adding a super-user course covering AppleScript.

Walgreens Co. — Retail Drug Chain

Company size: Approximately 2,700 total sites; approximately 75,000 employees (1,800 at site profiled)

Sample FileMaker Pro applications:

Walgreens maintains multiple FileMaker Pro databases, most of which provide back-end database support for Web front ends. Walgreens has developed Web pages/intranet Web pages that perform queries against FileMaker Pro databases. Hundreds of users are accessing a back-end FileMaker Pro database without realizing it. To the user, the interface is a Web page that returns data with merely a mouse click. This database took two people two weeks to build.

Summary: The Marketing Services and Systems division utilizes FileMaker Pro to build ad-hoc solutions at primarily the workgroup or individual level. However, some workgroup applications have wended their way to the Intranet for Web access, such as the seasonal sales reporting system. The access time has been maintained by splitting the solution into several databases. The users at Walgreens are “very savvy” and adept at constructing FileMaker Pro databases. If a solution or project becomes too complex, IS will step in to contribute more expertise; however, the team remains a combination of users and IS staff members. Like Frankel & Company, Walgreens is also pushing the envelope with FileMaker Pro and has begun efforts to extract data from corporate databases using ODBC. FileMaker Pro gives non-IS areas of the company the ability and flexibility to create and maintain shared databases that can be accessed by a wide number of users via an Intranet.