

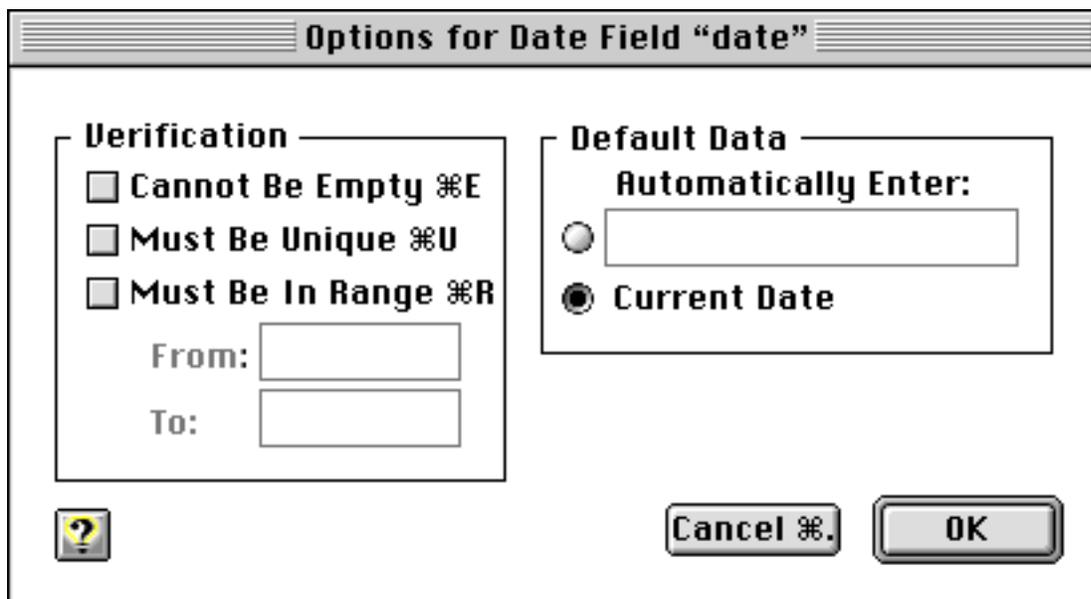
## Automatic entry of dates in Database by Cindy O'Hora

A clever computer user is always looking for ways to get the machine to do the work for them. One such example is automatic entry. You can have dates automatically entered into an AppleWorks database.

It is a good idea to put an entry or creation date on many different kinds of records. If for no other reason, dating records allows you to use Find or Match to select out groups of records by date. I'm happy to have them dated, but I don't want to enter the date myself. So I have the computer do it.

### Add a date field to your database:

1. Open the database.
2. Go Layout ... Define Fields.
3. Type date in the Field name box.
4. **Change the Field type menu to Date.** This is important! You can enter dates in a text field, but then you are limiting the functionality of the data.
5. Click Create.
6. With the new date field still highlighted - **Click the Options button.**
7. In the Options dialog box in the Default Data area, click the Current Date bullet. Click OK to close the box and make the setting.



8. Alternatively you could have it automatically enter a set date. You specify that date in the box under Automatically Enter. Each new record you create will have that date automatically entered in the field.

What if for some reason you want to change the date after it has been entered?

Just click in the date field of that record and change it. This is true for a set by you date or a today's date setting.

## Modify an existing date field

Suppose you want to make this modification to your existing database. It already has dates you've entered by hand. No sweat. **(Remember - any time you plan to make a change to a database, I advise you to tweak a [copy](#). If you aren't happy with the result, just pitch the copy.)**

1. Open the database.
2. Go Layout ... Define Fields.
3. Select the date field in the Field Name Box.
4. Click the Options button.
5. In the Options dialog box - Default Data box - click the Current date bullet. Click OK.

The old records don't change their dates. But with each new record you add, the date will be automatically entered. Isn't that sweet!

## ? FAQ

- **Can I still do Finds and Matches on these autoentry fields?** Mas oui! But of course, you can!
- **Can I still calculate due dates or years of membership using them?** Absolutely!
- **The date entered is incorrect.**

The date is derived from the setting of the clock in your Mac. Go to the Date and Time Control Panel and correct that setting.

## ❖ I tried what you suggested, but I get a text options dialog box.

Then you did not format the field as Date. You have a text field into which you are entering dates. You need to reformat the field as a date field.

1. Make a [copy](#) of your database. On the copy make these changes.
2. Go Layout ... Define Fields.
3. Select the field you are entering dates in and **change the Field type menu to Date**. Click Modify. You will be warned that you may lose data that cannot be converted. Click OK.
4. Assuming your data converted without mishap pitch the old database or change it using the directions above.

❖ I set the date to read **Dec. 12, 2000** in my AppleWorks preferences, but they continue to read 12/12/00 in the database field. What's up?

### To change the date format in a database field:

1. Open the database.
2. Go Layout ...Layout.
3. Double click on the blank box of the date field.
4. Make your selection in the Date format dialog box.

You may have to enlarge the size of the field to make the whole date visible. Do that using the arrow tool before you go Layout ... Browse to return to the regular view.

"Progress is impossible without change; and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything." ~George Bernard Shaw

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