

Installing the House Map Creator Upgrade

This *House Map Creator Utility* ships on the same CD-ROM as *Tick-It! 2K*. It is stored in the directory called CREATOR.

To install the House Map Creator Utility:

- ① Insert your CD-ROM into the drive.
- ② From the START Menu, Choose RUN...
- ③ Type in: D:\CREATOR\SETUP.EXE
(where D: is the letter of your CD-ROM)
- ④ Follow the prompts of the Setup Program.

The Setup program will place an Icon to launch the Creator directly in your Programs Menu.

What is a House Map File?

House Map Files store information that define the Size and Seating Layout for a Given Venue. Once defined, ***Tick-It! 2K*** can read such files to “compile” fast binary images that correspond to Events and Performances.

All House Files end with the extension of **.HSE**, and can be named anything that suits you, as long as you do not violate system file naming rules. (such as the DOS 8.3 naming rules for older server systems)

Before any events can be created that take place at a specific venue, a House Map File **MUST** be created first. Afterward, as long as the seating arrangement does not change, that House Map File can be used Over and Over again.

House Map Files and Event Files

House Map Files supply critical information during the creation of Reserved Seating Events. The Binary Event Files that ***Tick-It! 2K*** creates can ONLY be read as long as the House Map File that was used to create them still exists in the SAME CONDITION it was in during the creation process. This is a critical thing to remember. House Map Files are INTIMATELY LINKED to Event Files that are created using them.

With this in mind, an operational rule comes to light. If you CHANGE the contents of a HOUSE MAP FILE, you run the risk of making ALL EVENTS created for that House UNUSABLE! Naturally, this would be bad. Therefore, the House Map Creator WILL NOT let you save a House Map File by OVER-WRITING Another House Map File. This is why this utility is called a CREATOR, and not just an EDITOR. You see, each time you run this, you are committed to CREATING a NEW House Map File, even if you are just modifying an existing layout. The reason is to keep existing events functional.

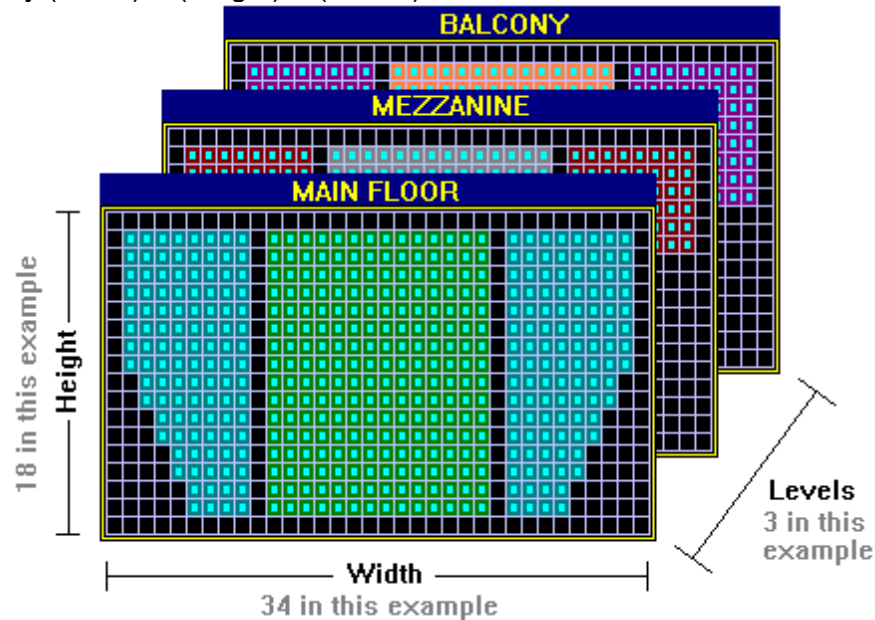
Practical Limitations of the Creator

We have not tried this Creator to construct House Map Files with Houses that have more than 5 Levels. If you need to, try it, and let us know what happens.

At NCS Offices, we have a stress test house file for a three level, 13,100 seat football stadium. We coded this file by hand to use as a memory stress test. This House is defined at 211 X 65 X 3. (Width) X (Height) X (Levels) The Creator can open and manipulate this file, and save it as a new house without difficulty. This file is MUCH larger than any active customer's house map that we know of, so you should never really bump into any problems using the Creator.

Specifying the Size of Your House

A House Size is specified in cells, like a tic-tac-toe grid, where each cell has the potential to hold one seat. The Size is given by (Width) X (Height) X (Levels), as shown here:



Note that even BLANK, EMPTY CELLS count toward the Width or Height total number.

How to Calculate the WIDTH of your House:

Find the Longest ROW of Seats in your House, from Left to Right, and count those seats. For each Aisle Break that occurs in that row, ADD at least 1 to the count of the seats. If you want to have some blank padding on the Right and Left side of the display, add at least 2 to the number you get. The number you arrive at is the MINIMUM WIDTH for your House. Consult the example above.

How to Calculate the HEIGHT of your House:

Find the Level in your House that has the Largest Number of ROWS. For each Aisle Break that occurs from Back to Front in that Level, ADD at least 1 to the count of the Rows. If you want to have some blank padding on the Top and Bottom side of the display, add at least 2 to the number you get. The number you arrive at is the MINIMUM HEIGHT for your House. Consult the example on the previous page.

How to Calculate the NUMBER OF LEVELS of your House:

Well, this is really rather self explanatory. For each different Floor, or Level, Count that. Consult the example on the previous page.

Your House Name and Address

Your House needs a name, and optionally, three lines of an address. You can specify these by clicking on the NAME / ADDRESS button found on the lower control panel. Whatever name you give your House is what will be printed on Tickets, should you specify the House Field. Also bear in mind, that whatever name you give the house is what will be displayed in ***Tick-It! 2K*** during those times when the operator needs to select a house. If you have one house that has multiple seating arrangements in use for any given season, you need to give each variation of that house a UNIQUE name, otherwise, the operators will not be able to tell the various seating arrangements apart.

Naming House Levels

House Levels can have any name you wish. When a New House is created, these names are set to LEVEL 1...LEVEL 2...LEVEL 3 and so on. While the level is displayed, simply type in the name of the level you prefer in the text field on the lower control panel.

Adding / Deleting Sections

A House must have AT LEAST ONE Section, up to a MAXIMUM of 89 Sections. Sections are added or removed by clicking on the SECTIONS button found on the lower control panel. When Sections are created, they are given names of SECTION 1... SECTION 2... SECTION 3... and so on. You may type in any section name that suits you, although be aware that really long section names might not fit in little ticket spaces when printing. Sections are colored in a background color you may select. As they are created, Sections are assigned colors sequentially, although you may change the display color to whatever you wish.

One small note on colors:

Tick-It! 2K makes use of 4 colors to display the status of seats, either EMPTY, SOLD, RESERVED or SELECTED. For obvious reasons, you are not allowed to set a section color to any of these four colors, otherwise the seats would become invisible under certain conditions!

Adding / Removing Seats

A single seat can be ADDED or REMOVED by double clicking on a House Map Cell. A pop-up menu will prompt you either for a section type, or allow you to select REMOVE SEAT(S)

Blocks of seats can be ADDED or REMOVED by dragging your mouse over a section of the House Map, then releasing the mouse button. A pop-up menu will prompt you either for a section type, or allow you to select REMOVE SEAT(S)

Seat POSITIONS are defined this way, but you must also define LABELS and NUMBERS for EACH SEAT before the house can be saved to disk and used by *Tick-It! 2K*. Seats completely defined with position, label and number will turn RED on the display, to indicate they are finished.

Defining Seat Labels and Numbers

LABELS and NUMBERS for EACH SEAT must be defined before the house can be saved to disk and used by ***Tick-It! 2K***. Labels are usually Row letters, like A or BB or the like, but can often be table designations, like TBL5 or TBL7. Try to keep labels brief, as they will need to fit into the little field spaces designated for ROW on most ticket stock. Numbers can be any whole number for a seat, from -32000 to +32000, although we do not know of anyone using negative seat numbers at this time!!!

To designate the LABEL and NUMBER for a single seat, point at the seat and RIGHT CLICK. You will be prompted to enter the Label and Number. Seats completely defined with position, label and number will turn RED on the display, to indicate they are finished.

The Auto Seat Number Feature

Since most Houses have some sort of order to their seat labeling and numbering, this House Map Creator comes with a feature that let's you specify a numbering rule, and it will apply the rule for you to all seats that match the section you are pointing at. Here's how it works:

You point at a seat and right click. Enter the LABEL and STARTING SEAT NUMBER. You also must enter an INCREMENT and a DIRECTION. Let's look at four possible ways this could work, using a label of "A", a starting number of 1, and an increment of 2 (giving us all odd numbers). Here we go:

AutoNumber from Right to Left:

A-11	A-9	A-7	A-5	A-3	A-1

AutoNumber from Left to Right:

A-1	A-3	A-5	A-7	A-9	A-11

AutoNumber from Bottom to Top:

A-9					
A-7					
A-5					
A-3					
A-1					

AutoNumber from Top to Bottom:

A-1					
A-3					
A-5					
A-7					
A-9					

In order to use the AUTO FILL SECTION feature, you must specify either RIGHT to LEFT or LEFT to RIGHT for a seat number direction, as the AUTO FILL DIRECTION always assumes an UPWARDS Direction for filling blocks.

This should make even fairly large houses an easy matter to detail! Seats completely defined with position, label and number will turn RED on the display, to indicate they are finished.

Inserting Special Characters into Your House Map

For clarity, or visual orientation, you might like to put letters and special characters into your House Map. This is perfectly all right to do so, we often do it ourselves here at NCS. For letters and other characters that can be typed in, just do that, one character per cell. For example, you might want to spell out the word STAGE in the area on the map where the stage would be.

For other, IBM style graphics characters, double click, or drag a selection on the house map, and select SPECIAL CHARACTERS from the Pop-Up menu. A grid of insertable characters will appear for you to chose from.

Limitations and Restrictions

You can use this utility to load an existing house map, alter it, then save it as a new house map, with these restrictions:

You cannot change the WIDTH, HEIGHT or NUMBER OF LEVELS

You cannot remove sections without first removing the seats that use that section designation.

Sections can only be removed in REVERSE CARDINAL ORDER. That means you cannot remove SECTION 6 before removing SECTION 7.

The resulting (different) house seating arrangement MUST BE SAVED AS A NEW FILE.

Saving a Brand New House

The House Map Creator WILL NOT let you save a House Map File by OVER-WRITING Another House Map File. This is why this utility is called a CREATOR, and not just an EDITOR. You see, each time you run this, you are committed to CREATING a NEW House Map File, even if you are just modifying an existing layout. The reason is to keep existing events functional.

Saving Altered House Maps

If you CHANGE the contents of a HOUSE MAP FILE, you run the risk of making ALL EVENTS created for that House UNUSABLE! Naturally, this would be bad. Therefore, the House Map Creator WILL NOT let you save a House Map File by OVER-WRITING Another House Map File. This is why this utility is called a CREATOR, and not just an EDITOR. You see, each time you run this, you are committed to CREATING a NEW House Map File, even if you are just modifying an existing layout. The reason is to keep existing events functional.

Altered House Map Files will be treated as NEW House Map Files, since for all practical purposes, they represent New and Unique Seating Arrangements.

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