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General Questions

My question isn't answered on this page, where else can I find answers?

There are several other FAQ pages on this site:

- [Install/Activate FAQ](#)

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You can search for answers (or submit your own questions) on the Panorama QNA discussion forum:

- [Panorama QNA Discussion Forum](#)

You can submit questions to ProVUE's technical staff using this form:

- [Tech Support Request Form](#)

You can submit questions to ProVUE's customer support staff (questions about orders, serial numbers, etc.) using this form:

- [Customer Service Form](#)
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Why is Panorama RAM based instead of disk based?

The fundamental, overriding difference between Panorama and all other database programs is that Panorama is RAM instead of disk based. When you open a Panorama database the entire database, including all of the data, is loaded from the disk into the computer's RAM. From then on Panorama doesn't use the disk at all (until you use the Save command). All searching, sorting, editing, and everything else occurs directly in your computer's high speed RAM.

Other database programs are disk based. Every time you edit a field, sort, search, or perform any other operation it must access the disk. Unlike RAM, the disk is a mechanical device with parts that actually move each time you access the disk. This makes disk access thousands of times slower than RAM access.

How much data can fit in RAM?

Panorama uses your computer's RAM very efficiently. Because Panorama doesn't use indexes (see below) Panorama databases are very small compared to FileMaker (typically six to ten times smaller). For example, one of the demo databases included with Panorama is a typical contacts database with 10,000 records and about two dozen fields — this database is only 2.2 megabytes! Some Panorama users have created databases with over one million records. Typically a Panorama database is about the same size as an ASCII text file containing the same data.

What if my database doesn't fit in RAM?

Panorama requires that the entire database fit in RAM. With today's large RAM capacities and low prices this is rarely an issue.

Why doesn't Panorama use indexes?

You might be surprised to know that when you ask a disk based database to search or sort it does not actually search or sort the data itself. Instead it searches or sorts a complex structure it has built called an "index." An index is a special directory that contains hints for finding items quickly.

Panorama Database Software - Frequently Asked Questions

A database index performs much the same function as an index at the end of a textbook. Instead of searching the entire book page-by-page you find the entry in the index and then jump directly to the correct page. Disk based database programs use a similar index system to allow them to search or sort a large database in a second or two instead of in minutes or hours.

Unlike other database software, **Panorama doesn't use indexes**. Because RAM is so fast, Panorama can actually perform searches or sorts using the brute force approach, the equivalent of searching a book by reading all of the pages (but very, very quickly). Essentially Panorama is the ultimate speed reader. Although indexes can help a database search and sort faster, they also come with some very significant drawbacks.

1. Indexes are very large. Unlike a textbook index which is only a few pages, databases indexes are often much larger than the actual data itself. **Since Panorama doesn't use indexes, the database size is much smaller.**
2. Indexes have a very complicated structure that must be updated any time the database is modified. As your database gets larger this structure gets more complex, so updating the structure takes longer and longer each time you edit the database. In addition this complex structure is prone to corruption (which explains why FileMaker, for example, needs a command to rebuild corrupted databases). It's actually not the database itself which is corrupted, but the index. **Since Panorama doesn't use indexes, editing the database doesn't get slower as you add more records, and the index can't get corrupted** because there wasn't any index in the first place.
3. Even though the indexes are large they actually don't contain all of the information in the database (most of the index space is taken up with hints to make searching faster). Since a disk based database is searching the index, not the database, this means that many useful search queries are impossible. **Since Panorama doesn't use indexes it can perform any search you can think of**, including phonetic searches (sounds like "alan"), partial matches, comparisons between fields (Price is more than twice the P/E ratio), searching for fields that contain only letters, only numbers, or some other combination, searching all fields at once, **even live keystroke-by-keystroke searches** (like iTunes and Spotlight).

Is Panorama easy to learn and use?

Yes, but don't take our word for it. MacWorld says "FileMaker Pro may be lauded for its easy database-form creation, but that program's results have nothing on Panorama's user-friendly databases." TidBITS.com says "Panorama is the best general database program I've ever used. ... Have I communicated just what I find so wonderful about this program? It's the fact that my data feels safe and is easy to check on. It's the ingenious anticipation of all my needs. It's how the workings of my databases are easy to track down. It's the generosity of the supplied examples. It's the fact that easy things are easy and hard things are not that hard." Danny Grizzle of Media Mogul Productions says "*It is extremely approachable, useful to newbies in minutes, but also tremendously capable with depth few are ever likely to outgrow.*" [Read more testimonials here.](#)

Is Panorama relational?

Yes. Panorama supports one-to-one and one-to-many relationships, and also supports "equal or lesser" relationships for looking up data in rate tables (for example tax or shipping rates).

What are the operating system requirements for running Panorama?

The current version for both OS X and Windows is Panorama 6.0.

Panorama 6.0	Mac OS X 10.4 (Intel/PPC), 10.5 (Intel/PPC), 10.6, 10.7 Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7
Panorama 5.5	Mac OS X 10.4, 10.5, 10.6 (requires Rosetta to for OS X 10.6) Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7
Panorama V	Mac OS 9, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, 10.5 (runs "native" in OS X *)
Panorama 4.0	Mac OS 7.6 or higher (including OS X in "Classic" mode up to OS X 10.4) Windows 98, ME, 2000, XP, Vista or higher
Panorama 3.0	Mac OS 6.0 to 8.6 (including 68K based computers)

How does Panorama compare with FileMaker?

See the [Panorama vs. FileMaker](#) comparison page.

Does Panorama keep each database stored in a separate file?

Yes, each database is self-contained in its own file. You can also set up a "file set" icon that will automatically open a group of databases, however the databases themselves are still in separate files.

Can the database structure and data be stored separately?

No, each database is contained in a single file that contains data, data attributes, calculations, forms and any programs related to the data.

Can multiple users access a database across a network?

The standard version of Panorama only allows single user access. If you want multiple users to be able to access a database simultaneously you'll need to use the [Panorama Enterprise Server](#).

What are the capabilities and limitations of the Panorama demo?

The Panorama trial version is fully functional for a limited trial period (normally 15 days unless you have a special coupon). During this trial period the software is fully functional — you can create new databases of any size, analyze, manipulate data, print, create layouts and reports, write programs — anything that can be done with the full version of Panorama. This allows you to fully evaluate Panorama before making your purchase.

When the trial period is over, Panorama continues to work, but acts like a shareware program. Any time you save or print a database with more than 250 records the Panorama demo will pause to display a dialog suggesting that you consider purchasing the product before allowing you to save or print. Other than this the product is fully functional for single user databases. This

"shareware" mode continues indefinitely with no time limit. Purchasing a serial number takes Panorama out of this "shareware" mode and back to fully functional status.

Earlier versions of Panorama (5.0 and 4.0) do not offer a fully functional trial period. Instead, the software starts out in the "shareware" mode (displaying a dialog suggesting that you consider purchasing the product before allowing you to save or print databases with more than 250 records), and remains in this mode until you purchase a serial number.

Will there be an iPhone/iPad version of Panorama?

We think it would be great to have Panorama on iOS devices (we use iPhones & iPads ourselves), but the answer to this question isn't entirely up to us. Apple tightly controls what applications are available for iOS devices, and the iOS SDK explicitly disallows any application that has a programming language, like Panorama. All the indications are that if we developed Panorama for iOS, it would be rejected by Apple. In fact, just getting accepted isn't always the end of the story — in some cases apps have been removed after being on sale for months (sorry, you're out of business as of today). Here are just a few of the web pages we've seen on this subject.

[Briefs App in Limbo](#)

[Delusions of Grandeur: Briefs App Almost on the App Store](#)

[The Inhospitable Land of the App Store](#)

[The Emperor's New Clothes](#)

[There's No App for That](#)

[Interview: Jared Brown, iPhone developer about having his app rejected](#)

[iPhone App Store roulette: A tale of rejection](#)

Creating iOS versions of Panorama would require huge investments in new UI design and coding. With the tremendous uncertainty over whether even a single customer would ever be allowed to purchase the software, this is an investment risk that is simply not tenable for a small developer like ProVUE. We're hoping that the situation may change, and we're certainly paying close attention to developments in this area. For now, however, we are not doing any development for iOS devices, but you can use an iPhone or iPad as a web client for the Panorama Enterprise Server.

What is the Enhanced Image Pack?

The Enhanced Image Pack extends the ability of Panorama to display images. Without this pack Panorama can only display Apple PICT format (and BMP format on Panorama for Windows). The Enhanced Image Pack adds the ability to display JPEG, TIFF, GIF, PhotoShop and other formats. For more information see [Panorama Enhanced Image Pack](#). To order the Enhanced Image Pack use the on-line [order form](#).

Note: To use the Enhanced Image Pack on Windows your machine must have Apple's [QuickTime](#) package installed.

What is the Zip/Spell pack?

The Zip/Spell Dictionary Pack contains two dictionary files - *US Zip Codes* and *US English*. With these dictionaries you can spell check forms and data, and look up the city, state, and county for any US Zip Code. For more information see [Zip/Spell Dictionary Pack](#). To purchase this optional package please use

Panorama Sheets

What is the difference between Panorama and Panorama Sheets?

[Panorama Sheets](#) is a member of the Panorama family of RAM based database products. Panorama Sheets includes all of features of the Panorama Data Sheet view (except for the Action menu), including:

- Fast searching, sorting, data manipulation and data analysis
- Flexible database structure (insert/delete/merge/split/hide/show/rearrange fields)
- Clairvoyance, Smart Dates, Auto-Capitalization and other data entry assistants
- Powerful import/export options
- Relational
- Crash Proof and Goof Proof (Total Recall and Time Lapse)

Panorama Sheets does not include any support for the design sheet, forms, crosstabs or procedures (programming). Other minor differences include: 1) Panorama Sheets is limited to 20 Mb of memory (Panorama supports 1.2 Gb), 2) no view menu, 3) no tool palette (left side of window), 4) streamlined menus, 5) standard Help menu, 6) no wizards, 7) no file sets.

Are databases compatible between Panorama and Panorama Sheets?

Yes. All members of the Panorama family use the same file data format, so it's easy to start with Panorama Sheets and then later upgrade to a full copy of Panorama, or to share databases between colleagues that have both programs. Note: If a database saved with a full copy of Panorama includes forms, procedures or crosstabs, these components will not be accessible within Panorama Sheets. Panorama Sheets will not open databases that were not saved with a visible database window.

Questions about Forms, Graphics & Reports

Can I lay out forms and reports the way I want?

Yes. Panorama's graphic editor uses standard object drawing techniques and includes tools for about two dozen types of objects, including shapes, text, images, movies, buttons, lists, pop-up menus, matrixes, even a complete word processor. There are also extensive tools to help you design your form and get everything lined up perfectly.

Can Panorama print labels?

Yes. You can set up the label format yourself or choose from about two dozen ready-to-use Avery label templates. Panorama can automatically print labels in

1-up, 2-up, 3-up, 4-up or more columns, and can print labels across each row or down each column.

Can I use multiple fonts/sizes/styles within a cell?

Panorama normally allows only a single font/size/style within a database cell. However, if you use Panorama's built-in word processor you can include not only multiple fonts, sizes and styles, but also tab stops, colors, indentation, left/right center justification and adjustable leading (vertical spacing). You can include the word processor in any database you create or you can use our ready-to-use *Mini Correspondence* wizard, with built-in VCard support.

Can I include pictures and movies in a database?

Pictures and movies are not included in the database itself, but can be linked by reference (location and name) and displayed on any form. If you want to use JPEG, TIFF, GIF, PNG or PSD format you'll need the optional [Enhanced Image Pack](#). On a PC system you'll also need to install Apple's [QuickTime](#).

Questions about working with other software (import/export/web/email)

Can Panorama import data from my existing databases and spreadsheets (FileMaker, Excel, etc.)?

Panorama can easily import tab and comma delimited (CSV) text files. Consult the documentation for your database or spreadsheet to learn how to export your data in these universal formats. Panorama 6.0 can also directly import from Excel or Numbers spreadsheets. On the Mac you can import simply by dragging a spreadsheet selection to the data sheet or the Import Wizard, on Windows systems this must be done thru the clipboard.

Can Panorama export data to other database or spreadsheet software?

Panorama can easily export tab and comma delimited (CSV) text files. Consult the documentation for your database or spreadsheet to learn how to import data in these universal formats. Panorama 6.0 can also export directly to Excel or Numbers. To do this open the Export wizard and set up the export options. Then drag from the wizard to the spreadsheet (Mac) or transfer the data via the clipboard (Mac or Windows).

Can Panorama import/export VCards with other applications (Address Book, Entourage, MYOB, etc.)?

VCards are an industry standard for "electronic business cards" (see ["VCards take guesswork out of sharing contact info"](#)). If your Panorama database contains contact information (name, address, phone, etc.) it can be set up to work with VCards. If you create your database with Panorama's *New Database*

Wizard most of this setup is done for you, otherwise you'll need to configure the VCard connection with the *Generic Fields* wizard. You can use the *VCard Wizard* to exchange either single or multiple VCards at time, or you can add a few lines of code to your database to build this capability directly into your applications.

Can Panorama dial the phone?

Yes. Panorama 5.5 or later includes five "plug-in" modules (called *channels*) for phone dialing.

- [Tone](#): This channel generates touch tones using the computer's speaker. Hold the phone up to the speaker to dial (it really works!).
 - [Dialectic](#): This is a highly rated dialing program that can dial using over a dozen methods, including via a modem, bluetooth cellphone, or via a number of VOIP phone systems.
 - [Jon's Phone Tool](#): This program is a predecessor of Dialectic (see above) and is no longer available, but you can continue to use it if you purchased it before.
 - [ABDialer](#): This channel uses a shareware program that can dial using a modem or via a bluetooth cellphone.
 - [Vonage](#): This channel directly accesses the internet to dial your Vonage Internet phone.
 - On the PC currently only the Tone and Vonage channels are available.
 - The "plug-in" channel system is modular, so we can and probably will add additional modules in the future.
-

Can Panorama send e-mails?

Yes. Panorama 5.5 and later includes several "plug-in" modules (called *channels*) for sending e-mail from Panorama. (Most of these modules requires a 3rd party e-mail software that you may have already or can acquire for free or at low cost — you select the module you want to use depending on which e-mail program you want to use.) Once a module is configured for your e-mail server you can send e-mail automatically from any database, including "bulk e-mail" (please use responsibly and do not spam). You can build e-mail functionality into any database and Panorama includes a built-in wizard for managing bulk e-mail. We've created a [YouTube video](#) that teaches the basics of sending e-mail with Panorama.

Can web content be integrated with my database?

Yes. Panorama V or later can fetch and download data from any web server, including tables, images, maps, directories, rates, catalogs, news stories — anything you can see with a web browser can be automatically loaded and used with Panorama. You can use this information directly or in combination with your existing data.

Can Panorama export to HTML?

Yes. The *Text Export* wizard makes it easy to export the contents of any database as an HTML table. This wizard gives you complete control over the table appearance, including the font, size, column widths, and row shading. Panorama's programming language can be used for further customization, even allowing you to include JavaScript in the generated HTML.

Can Panorama be used to generate dynamic web content?

Yes, this is one of the features of the [Panorama Enterprise Server](#).

Is Panorama ODBC or JDBC compliant?

No. We are investigating the possibility of including this feature in a future release.

Can I use Panorama with my iPhone?

Panorama does not currently support the iPhone. We are investigating the possibility of iPhone support in the future. You can use the iPhone as a web client with the [Panorama Enterprise Server](#).

Can I use Panorama with my Palm/PocketPC?

Panorama does not directly support export or synchronizing with Palm/PocketPC handhelds, but many Panorama users have successfully transferred data to their handheld devices by exporting the data as tab or comma delimited text.

Questions about programmability

Is Panorama programmable?

Yes, Panorama has a complete program development environment. Like Basic, C or Java your programs are text based and may be editing using Panorama's built-in text editor or your favorite text editing program. If you have programming experience you'll find all of the standard constructs you are familiar with, including:

- o Structured control flow (if/else/endif, case, loops)
- o Subroutines (with parameter passing and local variables)
- o Local, global and permanent variables
- o Text, numeric, date and array data
- o Built-in debugger (with breakpoints and single stepping)
- o Extensible language (build your own statement and function extensions to the language)
- o Support for scripts written in Perl, Ruby, Python, PHP, AppleScript and shell scripts
- o Cross reference tool for managing large projects
- o GUI tools for assisting in the design of windows, dialogs and menus

Panorama programs can be triggered by buttons, menus, or automatically triggered by various user actions (opening and closing files, etc.) Your programs can completely manage control of the user experience, including full customization of windows, dialogs and menus.

Do I have to learn programming to use Panorama?

Absolutely not. In fact many customers have been using Panorama on a daily basis for years without ever writing a single line of code. You can set up databases, enter data, sort, select, summarize, calculate, create graphic layouts and reports, even charts without learning any programming.

On the other hand it's easy to write simple programs in Panorama, and even a simple program can save time by automating tasks you perform regularly. For beginning users Panorama even includes a "program recorder" feature. This feature watches and records your actions for later playback. You can use your recordings as is, or customize them after they have been recorded with Panorama's built-in program editor. The recorder is a great way to "ease into" acquiring basic programming skills.

How does Panorama's programming language compare with other languages like C, Basic, etc.?

If you have used Basic, C, Pascal or JavaScript you should quickly be comfortable with Panorama's built in programming language. Of these languages Panorama is probably closest to Basic, but it incorporates ideas from a number of sources. Panorama's programming language is tightly integrated with the database. You'll find dozens of statements for manipulating database information, as well as user interface elements like windows, menus and dialogs.

One thing you'll immediately notice about Panorama's programming language is that it is very free format. Unlike C and Pascal it does not require a separator semicolon (or any other character) between statements. Unlike most Basic implementations it allows multiple statements per line, and it also allows a statement to be split across multiple lines (as long as you don't split a token in the middle). For example you can put three statements on one line, like this:

```
statement1 statement2 statement3
```

Like Basic, Panorama's programming language does not use program blocks, but has special statements (else, endif, endcase) to indicate the end of a block.

```
if this=that
  statement1
```

```
statement2  
statement3  
endif
```

Like most programming languages (but unlike some versions of Basic) Panorama requires that you declare variables before you use them (with the local, global or fileglobal statements). However, Panorama has very loose variable typing. Not only do you not have to define the type of a variable when you declare it, you can change the type of data held in a variable at any time. This program fragment is perfectly legal:

```
local myVariable /* declare the variable */ myVariable=3 /* assign a number */  
myVariable="hello world" /* assign text */ myVariable=93.45 /* back to a number  
*/
```

When using variables Panorama takes care of all memory allocation, and there are no pointers or pointer arithmetic. This example also shows that Panorama supports C++ style comments (you can also use // to comment to the end of the line). Unlike C, /* */ comments may be nested, making this a good way to temporarily "comment out" sections of code.

Panorama uses the + operator for both addition and text concatenation. The statement below will display 7:

```
message 3+4
```

while this statement will display 34:

```
message "3"+"4"
```

Panorama generally does not implicitly convert data types, so this statement will display an error message:

```
message 3+"4"
```

You can use the str(or pattern(function to explicitly convert numbers to text, and the val(function to convert text to numbers.

Like Basic, Panorama uses the = symbol for both assignment and equality comparison. The meaning depends on the context. In this example a value (3) is being assigned into a field or variable named x:

```
x=3
```

In this example the field or variable named x is being tested to see if it contains the value 3:

```
if x=3
```

Unlike C you cannot embed special characters in a string constant using backslash notation (for example "first line\nsecond line"). You must build a line like this by appending together the individual components

```
("first line"+chr(13)+"second line")
```

You can also use the ¶ and ⇥ symbols to represent carriage return and tab characters, for example

```
"first line" + ¶ + "second line"
```

Unlike C, subroutines are not handled as functions, but must be explicitly called with the call statement (similar to Basic's gosub statement). You can also pass parameters to a subroutine, like this:

```
call NewOrder, "Mark", "Wilson"
```

Panorama's programming language, which has roots back to 1986, is not object oriented. However, it is extensible, meaning that you can add your own statements and functions which are syntactically indistinguishable from Panorama's built in statements and functions.

For more information on Panorama's programming capabilities see Chapter 24, 25 and 26 of the Panorama Handbook and the Programming Reference wizard.

What text parsing tools does Panorama have?

Panorama has dozens of functions to assist with any text parsing job, including special functions for parsing HTML and XML tags. Panorama does not include any GREP functions, but almost any task that you might perform with GREP can be performed with combinations of Panorama functions. For more information see Chapter 24 of the Panorama Handbook and the Programming Reference wizard. (You can also perform GREP operations by embedding code in Perl, Ruby or Python into your Panorama programs.)

Is Panorama AppleScript compatible?

Yes. AppleScript extends the power of Panorama's programming language to

other programs on your computer. Using AppleScript you can control the Finder, web browsers, e-mail clients, FTP software, or any other application that supports AppleScript. There are two ways to use AppleScript from within Panorama — you can launch a script that you have pre-defined using Apple's Script Editor, or you can include AppleScript code directly within your Panorama procedures. (You can even build and execute an AppleScript on-the-fly). Panorama is also scriptable itself, so other applications can control Panorama.

Can Panorama access the OS X UNIX shell?

Yes. The *ExecuteUnix* statement, included in Panorama's programming language, allows Panorama programs to use any UNIX command. The output of the command (stdout) is automatically placed in a Panorama variable.

Can Panorama access the Windows Command Line?

Yes. The *ExecuteUnix* statement, included in Panorama's programming language, allows Panorama programs running on the PC to run any command line. The output of the command (stdout) is automatically placed in a Panorama variable.

Can I program Panorama using Perl? Ruby? Python? PHP?

Yes, Panorama 5.5 and later supports embedding programs written in any of these languages inside a Panorama procedure. If you are using a Mac these languages are already installed on your computer. If you are using a PC you'll need to [install them yourself](#).

How can I meet other Panorama programmers?

The Panorama QNA (questions and answers) list is an e-mail based community discussion forum. It's a great place to share ideas and find solutions to problems. Much of the discussion on this list revolves around programming tips and techniques, and members of our list are very generous with newcomers. Come and join the discussion! See the [QNA Email Forum](#) page to subscribe or unsubscribe from this list.
