

APPLE THREE USERS OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA  
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Sorcerer's Apprentice, Part 6  
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#### The REMark Indexer

As far as I know, the first program written by an ATUNC member and donated to our public domain library was introduced in June, 1985. It seems there hasn't been anything donated since then. ATUNC seems to be a group of users and abusers of A///s, which is a perplexing idea in light of the power and sophistication of the programming languages available for our trusty, electronic brain expanders.

There is a special and singular joy that arises from perfecting a program one has written, and in many ways it is the same gratification experienced by any type of artist. Besides, it's fun, makes the world a better place, and builds your self-confidence.

The program referred to above is the REMARK INDEXER. If you don't do programming, it would be useless to you. However, if you write long programs in Business BASIC, you'll come to appreciate its value.

When programming in BASIC, it's helpful to include comments on what different parts of the program are doing, or to label specific areas of the program. This helps others read and follow the logic of your work. More importantly, it aids you in keeping track of what you've done, especially when referring to a program written some time ago. If we had flawless memory retrieval in our heads, our need for computers would be significantly reduced.

BASIC provides a statement for inserting comments into a program that do not take part in the action of the program itself. This is the REMARK statement, which always follows the line number with the letters REM, followed by at least one space. You may then write anything you wish on that line, and the interpreter will ignore it up to the carriage return.

Short BASIC program can be written quickly, has a few REM statements, and can be fairly simple to keep straight. However, sometimes, I had the problem of working on long, involved programs over a period of time, and I forgot where I put certain subroutines. How can I know what line number to branch to, when I write modifications or additions to it?

The answer is the "Remark Indexer". It takes your BASIC program file, converts it to a text file, and then goes through line by line and prints onto paper any line that begins with the reserved word REM. The result is a printed list mapping the location of your subroutines, that is, provided you had the good sense to use REM statements liberally at the time you originally wrote your program.

By the way, I wrote the Remark Indexer when I was very new to BASIC. It's a good example of how a quest to write a simple program could lead to a deeper understanding of how to implement the features of a language. As soon as I saw the need for an indexer, I searched about figuring someone must have already written such a program. Even at the Apple Core, the granddaddy of all Apple user groups, my query was met with a "Hey, that's a good idea, why don't you yourself write one?" So don't put off the idea of writing a program, thinking someone else has probably already done it. You may be surprised the world is not yet so perfect as you thought.

Most of the methods of the Remark Indexer were the result of searching

the language for a way to accomplish the task. Although at the time, it seemed difficult, now those techniques have become routine and appear obvious to me. This is the essence of learning. Is it not?

I'll not list the disk contents here. If you are interested, order a copy from the ATUNC library. I hope it truly makes your work easier. It's a turnkey disk, needs a second disk drive, and a printer in your SOS.DRIVER file named .PRINTER.

Happy computing. Hoping sometime in the next 3 years, better less, someone else will donate the fruits of his/her programming labors to our ATUNC library.