

# Key OPs

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## Software rollover

If time and money are no object and laundry is your life, washing clothes piece by piece as your kid sheds them might make perfect sense. Although, perhaps a wiser allocation of resources would be to wait until you've collected a full load.

Software is like that, too. Releasing software updates as changes trickle in is effective, but not very efficient.

That's why DDMS is going to a new release schedule. The Quality Control staff will continue to collect programming updates and test them. Then, every four to six weeks, we will release a new version with an individual designator. The most recent release in mid-January was 3.F.

Version 3.G will be ready around April 1. It will contain all the enhancements and changes the DDMS programmers are currently working on.

Our users are also effective software testers and you sometimes find changes we need to make to our software. Non-emergency changes, Priority 2s, go into the hamper with the rest of the laundry. Each is assigned a tracking number. You can use the tracking number to follow the progress of

a requested change and see which software release it will be in.

Of course, life being what it is, now and then something comes up and you have to wash an item by itself.

With software, we call this a Priority 1 programming change — those which are critical to business. As soon as testing is completed, the program is copied to disk and rushed to you. The call remains open in Technical Support until you load and check that the programming change has addressed your needs.

Consolidating enhancements and changes into a regular software release will improve the speed and quality of our customer support. Standardized software versions allow us to more quickly diagnose problems by reducing the time required to duplicate your system's environment.

A consolidated software release also allows our quality control and product management teams to focus on making PGDOS more user-friendly and intuitive so your software is the highest possible quality. ☛

## Win Free Maintenance

How would you like to win a month's free maintenance (value up to \$350) for your company? You can use it for Software and I/O maintenance, Hardware maintenance or Optional Module maintenance.

All you have to do is read this issue of *Key Ops*, and you are off to a good start! Hidden somewhere in this issue is one of the following phrases:

- Do more with less using the DDMS system.
- Implementing new modules saves time and money.
- A trained key op is invaluable.

- Hiring a consultant periodically is a wise investment of time and money.
- Adding modules adds value to your software.
- Automation adds to the bottom line.

Once you've located it, write its location in the space provided on page 6 and fax or mail your entry to DDMS.

A winner will be drawn from all correct entries received before March 15, 1999. The winner will be announced in the next issue of *Key Ops*.

Only one winner per company per year. All decisions of the judges are final. Void where prohibited. ☛



Crystal Dennstedt

## From the Operations Manager's Desk

### Value of the KeyOp

One of the biggest mistakes a dealer can make is to spend the money for monthly maintenance and the DDMS system, and continue to do what

they have always done. Regardless of how many labor-saving features DDMS programs into the software, if a dealer does not learn how to use them, they are failing to realize the full value of what they've paid for. After all, the dealer who uses his DDMS system as an invoice printer pays exactly the same for his system and monthly maintenance as the progressive dealer who implements every new module, reduces his payroll and expands into new markets.

Success is not an accident; you have to plan for it. A strategic plan for the year should always include ways to add new modules, streamline processes, and take advantage of new features to improve the bottom line or to gain new markets.

If you rely on DDMS Technical Support to be your MIS group, it will hold you back. We are not equipped, staffed or organized to do that.

A trained keyop can take your business to the next level. A keyop who knows the system can build effective processes, maintain your system and answer questions quickly, without waiting for a call back from DDMS support. A recent study of support calls revealed that most system problems are actually process problems — a lack of training and knowledge. How much money is that costing you in employee downtime?

Optimally, the designated keyop should not necessarily be the one with the longest tenure in accounting, but the one who is willing to take the responsibility of learning new modules, attending users' meetings and teaching other users within your company about the system. A good keyop is a driven self-starter who builds a procedures manual so your business does not come to a grinding halt if one cog falls out. He or she uses the tools available, and there are plenty of tools.

If you rely on DDMS Technical Support to be your MIS group, it will hold you back. We are not equipped, staffed or organized to do that.

Without a trained keyop, a dealer does not get the full value of his maintenance dollars.

### Tech Tips from the Help Desk

Each issue of *Key Ops* magazine contains a pullout section with helpful tips and procedures. Save them in a binder to build your own quick-reference library.

### Documentation

The documentation that came with your system is more than just a convenient doorstep. It contains volumes of information to educate you about automating your business. With our Version 3 software release, we debuted a new documentation style. It's more concise and organized to help you readily lay your hands on the information you need. All of the new features of Version 3 are detailed in a single book, *What's New in Version 3*. Each chapter deals with a different feature, such as the new Multiple Units of Measure. The chapters are divided into four basic parts.

Continued on page 5



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*Key OPs* is a technical supplement for *Distributed Data*. It's intended for key operators of the DDMS system. Customers can obtain multiple copies for \$12 per year per additional copy (one copy is included in software maintenance). Subscriptions for non-customers are \$10 per issue or \$100 per year. DDMS is not responsible for the review, testing, or evaluation of any products advertised in *Key OPs*, nor does the publication of the ad imply that we endorse or recommend the advertised product or service.

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### DDMS Phone Directory

Administration: 800/366-3367 General Fax: 817/431-8303  
 Sales: 800/366-3367 Sales Fax: 817/431-0955  
 Support: 800/366-4778 Suppt. Fax: 817/431-0201 or 431-0956

Tech Tips from the Help Desk

# Using National Drop Ship

Letting your wholesaler ship orders directly to your customers is an efficient way to provide quick service by covering distances electronically.

Using your DDMS system, you can flag a customer account or an individual order to be drop shipped. Based on the customer's zip code, the wholesaler routes the order to its nearest stocking branch. The order is filled and shipped directly to the customer.

DDMS works with two wholesalers to provide this service: S.P. Richards and United Stationers. S.P. Richards' national drop ship program is USAExpress; United's program is National Express Delivery (NED). The DDMS generic national drop ship program is NDS.

## System Setup

In order for your system to correctly process national drop ship orders, you must set fields in the (A) Customer Master and the (LA) Customer and A/R Parameters screens.

### (A) Screen

Set the National Drop Ship Account field to Y. This flags all orders for the customer as national drop ships. Adding modules adds value to your software.

### (LA) Screen

In the National Drop Ship Route field, enter a unique default route. For example, you might use NDS, USAX or NED. The route you specify in the (LA) screen will be the default for all of your national drop ship orders. This field overrides the (A) screen Route field in Order Entry and distinguishes national drop ship tickets from all others.

This lets you keep your national drop ship orders separate from the orders you are not national drop shipping when transmitting. That way, you can handle exceptions — whatever your wholesaler can't fill — differently from how you handle orders you are not national drop shipping.

### Using the Route field to build P/Os

If you use Automated Short-Buy, you can separate

**Tech Tips from the Help Desk** presents answers to the questions dealers ask most. It has two formats: *If...Then* helps you find solutions: *If this happens, Then you do that.* *How Do I...* explains how to perform a procedure. Please save these columns in a binder for future reference.

Continued on page 4

```

17:43:29                (A) CUSTOMER MASTER REV. (11/23/98)                02/01/99
ACTION [C] _____
A-Ad,C-Chg,D-Del,I-Inq,F-Card,G-Auto,L-List,H-His,Q-Serv,S-Sale,T-Tax,R-Reindex
____ Company Location [ 1 ] _____ S-H-I-P-P-I-N-G A-D-D-R-E-S-S -
Acct #      10001 Dept :                Suite :
Name :ABC COMPANY                      Addr. :901 SAVANNAH DR
Suite :                                  City :KELLER
Addr. :901 SAVANNAH DR                  State :TX Zip #76248 [  ]
City :KELLER                            Contact [BOB SMITH      ]
State :TX Zip #76248 [  ]                National Drop Ship Account Y/N ?Y
Phone #817-555-1234 Sic :                Prepay ? _____ ORDER ENTRY _____
Status O/E :A Sls # 265 Route :DWTN      Taxable Y/N :Y Dist :      Remote ID :
Stat. Exempt [  ] Credit Limit $ 10000   Status OE :T TM1 : TM2 : OAE Exmp :
Entry Date :11/04/95 Start Limit $      Catalog Price : Best Pricing :Y
____ ADDITIONAL NAME & CONTACT _____ Disc Type :S 10.0% Hold Type : #
Name [  ] Contracts [4N] [5A] [  ] [  ]
Contact [.....] Type ? . Cost M/W/A/P/2-9 ? Cost Plus if Net :
____ R-E-M-A-R-K-S _____ Up List      % Columns :
Fax Number #817-555-1335                P/O Required ? B/O ? Substitutes ?
[  ]                                     Formats : Pick Ticket : Invoice :
[  ]                                     Hold ? Invoice Copies :
[  ]                                     Laundry List ID :
    
```

\*\* ENTER DATA OR <?> FOR HELP !!

To set up a customer's account for national drop ship, use the National Drop Ship Account field in the (A) screen.

You can separate your national drop ship orders by setting up a call code limited to the route field.

```

(LFAL) Vendor Call Number
-----
Call Number [__]
-----
Limits: (Line Item MUST Match ALL Limits To Go On P/O)
(I)nc/(E)xc Stock Classes ?_  [ ] to [ ]  [_,_,_,_,_]
(I)nc/(E)xc Departments  ?   [ ] to [ ]  [ , , , , ]
(I)nc/(E)xc Locations    ?   [ ] to [ ]  [ , , , , ] (I)nv/(G)/L ?
(I)nc/(E)xc Sic Codes    ? [ ] to [ ]  [ , , , , ]
(I)nc/(E)xc Assort Codes ? [ ] to [ ]  [ , , , , ]
(I)nc/(E)xc Routes      ?I [NDS ] to [NDS ] [ , , , , ]

Include UPSable Items Only Y/N ?
Specials To Put On P/O. [ , , , , , , ]
(AA-AAAA,ZZ-ZZZZ,SH-Shipto,SB-Short-Buy,BO-Back Order,SP-Item,PO-Spec. P/O)

Exceptions From Vendors:
Transfer Exceptions ? P/O #
(D-Dummy P/O, N-Next Call, S-Short-Auto, T-Next Time Slot)
Stop Process for Time Slot if P/Os Not Transmitted Y/N ?
Print Options: P/O's Y/N ? Printer [ ] Exceptions Y/N ? Printer [ ]

<RET> for Next Screen, <Esc> for Previous Screen

```

### Using National Drop Ship

**continued from page 3**

rate your national drop ship orders by setting up a call code limited to the route you set up in the (LA) screen. For example, NDS, USAX or NED. For orders you are not national drop shipping, set up your call codes to exclude the route you set up in the (LA) screen.

If you're not using Automated Short-Buy, you can create a Short-Buy Report (like a T-10) and limit by the route you set in the (LA) screen. When purchasing, run this Short-Buy first and create your national drop ship purchase order before running your Short-Buy for orders you are not national drop shipping.

Another reason for using a consistent national drop ship route code is that it lets you sort by route when you flush or batch print invoices. Since you are not delivering an item to the customer, you don't want national drop ship tickets mixed in with the orders you are not national drop shipping. Because they're all together, it makes it easy to pull out the national drop ship tickets so you can send a copy to the customer.

### Using NDS in Order Entry


In Order Entry, you can toggle the national drop ship on or off for any customer or order by using the drop ship special. When you type

DROPSHIP, the system displays the customer's current (A) screen setup. To change the default, at the Correct Y/N prompt, type N.

Regardless of the stock levels in the system, all national drop ship orders appear as backorders as long as the flag is set when the order is started. You can force ship any items that you want to deliver from your warehouse.

You can toggle the national drop ship on or off even after you have ended the ticket, so long as the ticket status is 4 - 7. To do so, in Order Entry, select [C] Change. The system displays global information about the ticket in the (GVC) Order Change screen. Tab to the National Drop Ship Order field and enter Y or N.

### Notify your Wholesaler

If you purchase from S.P. Richards, contact them about using USAExpress. For United customers, before using NED, United must assign you an account number and an order-taker number. Enter your NED account number in the Account #5 field of the (L6F) United Communications screen. Enter your NED order-taker number in the field to the right of the account number field. When you transmit orders to United, the system automatically looks at the Account #5 field in the (L6F) screen for those orders flagged for national drop ship. 

Notify your wholesaler that you are using national drop ship.

## Intranet web site means faster service for callers

**D**DMS will soon launch an Intranet information site that allows Support techs to access information faster.

Although for several months, this internal web site will be inaccessible to customers, you will still reap the benefits of quicker response times from DDMS Support. At present, if a tech does not know an answer, he must rely on Support managers, mentors, or reams of paper to find it. The eventual implementation of a database keyword search feature will reduce call turnaround time dramatically.

According to Paul Lewis, site construction

foreman, the site will provide links to volumes of information. He plans to provide enough information so that every tech gives the same answer to a question. The goal is an electronic database of knowledge to provide more consistent, accurate answers to your questions.

Step-by-step how-tos, troubleshooting tips, documentation, back issues of publications, and program descriptions are just a few of the topics that will be available. Techs will be able to fax information from the site to customers as needed.

Eventually, you will be able to visit the site to download information for yourself. 📧

### Value of a KeyOp continued from page 2

- Concepts
- Field Definitions
- Setup and Parameters
- Using the Feature

For Version 4, Using the Feature quick reference outlines will be available electronically.

### Videos and Workbooks

A quick and inexpensive way to teach new employees the basics is with videos and workbooks. Self-paced study is available at your convenience.

### Users' Meetings

Learn new applications and see what changes are going to be made in the next general release. Sit down with reps from DDMS and ask them questions face-to-face. Meet with other DDMS users and see how they solve the same problems.

### Classes

DDMS regularly conducts classes on specific topics to get you jump-started on new modules. Some of them are Furniture, Serialized, NT, and Going Live.

### On-Site Tech Visits

A DDMS tech can visit your business and teach you the applications you need to implement.

### Consultants

An efficiency expert can spot the areas that are

eating into your bottom line and show you how to fix them.

At DDMS, we have implemented a certification process for our Technical Support staff to insure each is operating at a knowledgeable level. In the future, this certification program will be available for your keyop as well.

An unfortunate by-product of life in the 20th century is that we never have enough time. The IN basket piles up with projects while we focus all our time and energy on putting out fires. In 2001, we'll still be putting out fires, while long-term projects remain undone.

The answer to your time crunch may lie within your DDMS system. It was designed, after all, to automate many of your routine tasks, allowing you to manage the exceptions. Our continuing quest is to build more value into each software release, by designing modules and features that can do your work for you. That lowers your overhead, improving the bottom line. 📧

Success is not an accident; you have to plan for it. A strategic plan for the year should always include ways to add new modules, streamline processes, and take advantage of new features to improve the bottom line or to gain new markets.

**No time to hold for Tech Support?**



Email us instead at  
[support@ddms.com](mailto:support@ddms.com).

## Now available on video



To get your Serialized module training materials, complete the form below and fax it to 1-817-431-0955.

If you've been looking for a Serialized training tool that's as inexpensive as it is effective, the answer is here. DDMS has just released a series of training videos and companion workbooks that you can use as often as necessary at your convenience to learn the Serialized module.

The first video, Logging Calls, starts with the basics. Monitoring Calls shows you how to monitor service calls in the (EZP) and (EZPT) screens. Dispatching Calls shows you the (EZP) and (EZPD) screens. Completing & Billing Calls and Selling Serialized Items & Contracts walk you through the details. Cycle Billing covers entering meter readings in the (EZV) screen and performing monthly billings in the (EZY) screen. Renewing Contracts walks you through the renewal process using the (EZU) screen.

In addition, to videos and workbooks, you also get a setup manual and a reference manual.

Best of all, the series is yours for a nominal shipping and handling fee of only \$10. To order yours, check the box below and fax this page to 817-431-0955.

## Hold on for 24/7!

It is late; you are stuck and you need help. You call the 24/7 Help Line, and after pressing the appropriate keys, suddenly you get a dial tone.

If you are not a regular 24/7 subscriber, you probably do not know that the dial tone means your call is being transferred to a Support tech's cell phone. Do not hang up! Hold on until your call rings through.



P.O. Box 507, Keller, TX 76244

**Bulk Rate  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Ft. Worth, TX  
Permit # xxxx**

I found the message!

It is located on page \_\_\_\_\_.

To be eligible to win a month's free software maintenance, fax or mail this completed form to:

Key Ops  
P.O. Box 507  
Keller, Texas 76244  
(817) 431-0955

Entry deadline: 3/15/99

### Mail To:

Yes! I want to order the Serialized Training package.

I understand my DDMS account will be charged \$10 for shipping and handling.