HyperCard: Damage To Large Stack May Be Command-Period Problem

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NOTE: The inability to compress large stacks was discovered and corrected in versions of HyperCard after release 1.0.1. The problem caused by pressing command-period when creating a new card was discovered and corrected in versions of HyperCard after release 1.1. The following information is for those using previous versions.

Some users have experienced damage to large HyperCard stacks, resulting in inaccessible stacks, and - in cases where the stacks were not backed up - potential loss of valuable data and time.

Damage to a stack may be the result of using the command-period keystroke to stop the creation of a new card. Stacks most susceptible to this problem are those containing "create a card" scripts, some of them written to test HyperCard's card limits. Stopping the creation of a card using command-period prevents HyperCard from completely creating the data structures needed to support the card. This is compounded when you attempt to compact the stack.

After backing up the file, try these methods:

- Launch HyperCard with any stack other than the damaged stack, such as the Home stack. Then, open the damaged stack with the Open Stack option (File menu).

- From the Message box or script, type: "go card 3 of stack 'your stack'".

- From a script, set lockScreen and lockMessages to true; then attempt to go to a specific card.

If any of these suggestions work, you might be able to write a retrieval script that will go from card-to-card within your stack and copy the contents elsewhere.

If you are not able to display any portion of your stack following the suggestions above, the stack's data structure is damaged to the point of requiring more powerful data recovery tools. FEdit or a similar disk editor may allow you to open your file, then copy and paste that information into

another file.

Meanwhile:

1. ALWAYS back up your files regardless of the size or the applications used to create them. Tools, such as Apple's Tape Backup 40SC, make this relatively painless, particularly when you compare that to the time and expense of having to recreate the data when a problem of this nature occurs.

2. DON'T type command-period when creating a new card.

3. Compact your stacks regularly, as often as after every 10 cards when creating or deleting.

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