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Rocky Mountain BASIC: No Exact Equivalent for Macintosh

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TOPIC -----

I'm using Rocky Mountain BASIC on an HP. Is there a similar package for the Macintosh?

DISCUSSION -----

The only implementation of BASIC for the Macintosh that is remotely similar to "Rocky Mountain BASIC" for the HP9000 series is Microsoft QuickBASIC. There are numerous differences, however, especially considering the machine-specific details of each BASIC. Rocky Mountain BASIC uses many commands and parameters that mean nothing to computers other than HP9000 systems. Likewise, Microsoft QuickBASIC uses Macintosh-specific commands that do not exist on other computers, as well as command syntax in traditional Microsoft BASIC style -- a style much different than that of Hewlett Packard's BASIC.

They do share the important ability to use subprograms and functions, but the method of implementing these is quite different between the two languages. Microsoft QuickBASIC would give your customer a powerful BASIC, but porting anything other than the simplest programs from Rocky Mountain BASIC will not be a trivial task -- especially with programs that are I/O-intensive because these tend to be the areas where the languages differ the most.

There are some definite benefits to using Microsoft QuickBASIC over HP's BASIC, such as advanced debugging features (breakpoints and animated tracing for source-level debugging) as well as the simpler mouse interface. Users can quickly grow accustomed to the Microsoft QuickBASIC product, while Rocky Mountain BASIC has a cruder interface and takes more time to master. Of course, you are already using Rocky Mountain BASIC, so the change in programming environment will be dramatic; to what degree depends on how familiar you are with Macintosh user interface conventions.

If you need additional information on Microsoft QuickBASIC, we suggest that you contact Microsoft directly. They should be able to provide more up-to-date information and could, perhaps, assist in deciding if their product will fit your requirements.

For more information, search under: "Microsoft"
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