

Q2Palm

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I. Introduction & Requirements

Q2Palm is a Windows-based application that summarizes your personal finances, enabling research of your expenses, income, and securities performance, on your Palm OS handheld device. Q2Palm accomplishes this by, first: interpreting Quicken Interchange Format (QIF). Then, the data is summarized into CSV files (comma-separated values). These CSV files can then be imported into a spreadsheet, database such as ThinkDB, or other third-party software such as TinyStocks Stock Manager (1.3 or later).

On a Palm OS-based handheld, the data produced by Q2Palm can be viewed using several different “small-footprint” database systems. I have chosen ThinkDB, by ThinkingBytes, Inc., because it is feature-rich, while maintaining simplicity and consuming very little memory. Of course, you can choose any database you like – but to save you the work of setting up a database, a set of starter tables is included with Q2Palm (these are ThinkDB database templates with custom lists, views and filters, etc.). Feel free to customize these tables, enjoy them, and/or create your own.

II. What is QIF

Quicken Interchange Format is the premier format for exporting transactions from your home finance software. The two primary products on the market for managing home finances (and the only two products tested with Q2Palm) are Intuit Quicken, and Microsoft Money. I expect that nearly every version of both products support the export of QIF. If you find a version of either product that does not, please contact me so I can be more specific in the future.

III. Installing Q2Palm

From the zip file, extract the Q2Palm.exe program to any folder. Consider creating a single directory for storing Q2Palm, QIF files, and Q2Palm reports (the summarization data), just for convenience.

To use the ThinkDB templates provided, these templates must first be placed in the proper directory. This directory is the backup directory of your HotSync username, i.e., c:\palm\yourname\backup. A quick way to automatically place these files in this special directory is to simply use ThinkDB Desktop to perform an ‘Open’ (browse for the template file) and ‘Save & Install’ (from the File menu, the button, or Ctrl-I).

Date Styles: As default, all dates produced by Q2Palm are in mm/dd/yyyy. To have Q2Palm create dates with day before month (dd/mm/yyyy), modify the Q2Palm.prefs file with the line that reads “dateStyle = mmddyyyy” and change it to read “dateStyle = ddmmyyyy”. The new version of Q2Palm has to be run at least once, and then exited, for the proper Q2Palm.prefs file to exist – and this file can

be found in the same directory as the Q2Palm.exe itself.

IV. Using Q2Palm

- Export the transaction data from your home finance software.
 - MS Money users: **IMPORTANT:** please choose the “Strict QIF” technique of exporting QIF.
 - Quicken users:
 - **IMPORTANT:** in the Account pull-down menu, “All Accounts” is located at the top of the list. You probably want to select this option, as it has more meaning than only exporting transactions for a single account.
 - Check the ‘Transactions’ checkbox.
 - If you are reporting on Stock transactions, check the “Security Lists” checkbox if you want access to stock ticker symbols (currently only useful in the Stock Manager import file).
- Launch Q2Palm
- Using Q2Palm, Browse for the QIF file (or, as with all file paths in this dialog, select a previously-entered path from the pull-down menu).
- Click “Interpret File”.
- Once the status reads “Done”, check the boxes next to the desired reports, and assign filenames.
- If creating a Stock Manager import file, click the “Edit Properties” button, to configure the contents of the import file, as desired.
- Click “Publish QIF Summarizations”. The files specified in the previous step now contain the summarized data.
- To create reports for other QIF files, or to start over, click “Restart”.
- Close the dialog when completed.

V. Using ThinkDB Desktop

Once Q2Palm has built the Summarization files, we are ready to import the data into ThinkDB, using ThinkDB Desktop (for Windows).

The first time you use ThinkDB Desktop with Q2Palm, you must use the Conversion Specs wizard, in the Import utility, to associate fields of the Q2Palm Summary files with fields of their corresponding ThinkDB databases.

VERY IMPORTANT: Before importing Q2Palm summaries to the ThinkDB templates that have been provided (TDB_tableName.pdb), these templates need to be placed in a special directory – see “Installing Q2Palm” (III) for details.

Once the templates are in the appropriate directory as described above, use the Conversion Specs wizard to associate fields. Luckily, despite the number of steps listed, this process is quick. Here are all the steps for your reference:

- 1) File | Import/Export (or Ctrl-M)
- 2) ‘New’ conversion spec
- 3) Give a Name for the spec, i.e., Category Specs, StockTx Specs, and StockSummary Specs for the three templates.
- 4) Click the tab ‘text-delimited’
- 5) Select comma as Delimiter
- 6) Check the ‘First record contains field names’ checkbox.
- 7) Select the ThinkDB template from the ThinkDB database pull-down menu
- 8) Click Next.

- 9) Click “<- All” to associate all fields.
- 10) Say ‘yes’ to ‘Use first field as categories’.
- 11) From here, I’ve found that the default field types are fine, but sometimes not perfect. For example, you might want floating point instead of integer dollars (or vice versa). To override the default type assignments, double-click the ThinkDB field and select the field type and number of desired decimal points, etc.
- 12) Select ‘Next’ and ‘Finish’ to complete the association process.

Finally, each time you want to refresh your ThinkDB databases with new Q2Palm summaries, just select ‘Run’ on the desired Conversion Spec of the Import/Export window. Then your subsequent HotSync deploys the data!

VI. Viewing Q2Palm data on the Palm with ThinkDB

Customize your own views, filters, expressions, .. analyze your spending habits, and even beam (infrared) databases to your colleagues!

Consider creating custom filters to do per-stock reporting. For example, the filter “Security = Microsoft” will show only those stock trades, etc.

Enjoy! Visit ThinkingBytes on the web to learn more about ThinkDB.

VII. Transferring Q2Palm stock data to TinyStocks Stock Manager

Once Q2Palm has produced the Stock Manager import file (as in IV. Using Q2Palm), you need to specify the path of that import file to the Stock Manager synchronization conduit. The quickest way to do this, to avoid browsing for the file, is to copy (Ctrl-C or right-click) the full file path to the clipboard, as it appears in the Q2Palm window. Then, right-click your HotSync Manager on your taskbar and select ‘Custom’. You are now only a few keystrokes away. Double-click the Stock Manager conduit from the list, and a window will appear (as in the URL below). Finally, Click “Import Data at next HotSync”, and paste the file path. This process needs to be repeated each time you have new stocks to transfer to the Palm.

Stock Manager HotSync Conduit: <http://palmstocks.net/docs.html#conduit>

Since multiple imports of data to Stock Manager are likely to result in duplicate records, you may consider deleting the Stock Manager database “StockMgrDB” from the Palm before doing your import.

Good luck! And feel free to email me with any questions you may have.

Contact Information:

Q2Palm, by Logan Fabyanske.

Email: Q2Palm@sihope.com

Available for purchase or demo from www.PalmGear.com or www.handango.com.

ThinkDB, by ThinkingBytes, Inc.

www.thinkingbytes.com

Stock Manager, by TinyStocks.com

www.tinystocks.com

Pocket Quicken, by LandWare, Inc.

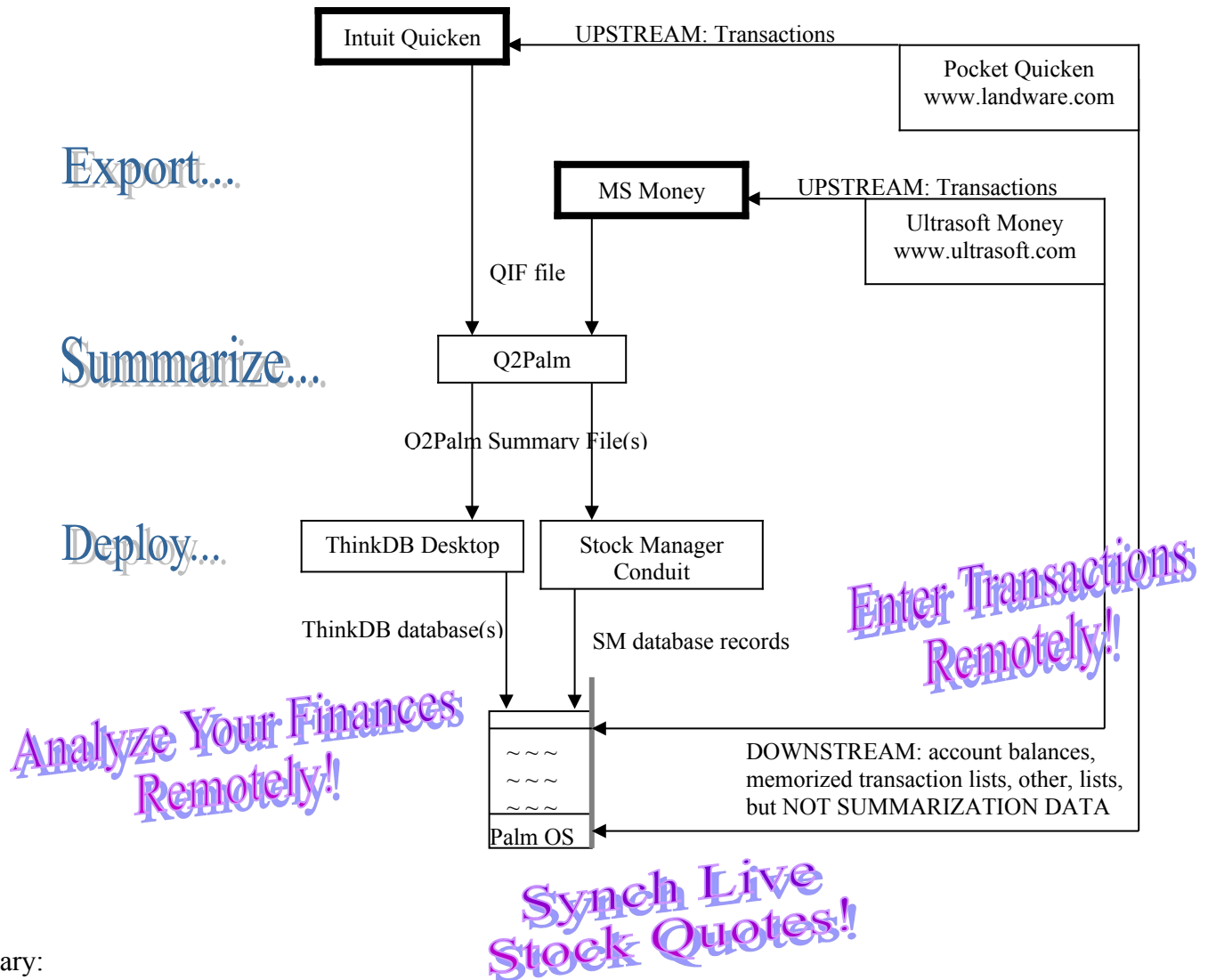
www.landware.com

Ultrasoft Money, by Ultra Software Systems, Ltd.

www.ultrasoft.com

see diagram below...

Data flow diagram for mobile finances



Summary:

- Q2Palm is a bridge between Quicken and the PalmPilot. With ThinkDB, it is a research tool, allowing remote analysis of summarized financial data. It works for *both* MS Money and Quicken because it relies on the QIF (Quicken Interchange Format) of exporting transactions. With TinyStocks Stock Manager, Q2Palm is the means by which your Quicken stock portfolio can be transferred to your Palm device, for synching to the Internet for live quotes.
- UltraSoft Money and Pocket Quicken are for remotely entering transactions to MS Money, and Quicken, respectively. Unlike Q2Palm, they are not research tools, and they do not use QIF – they are remote data entry tools, for sending data in the opposite direction, and they synchronize directly to the desktop data file, without the use of QIF files.