The PDA Toolbox Conversion Utility
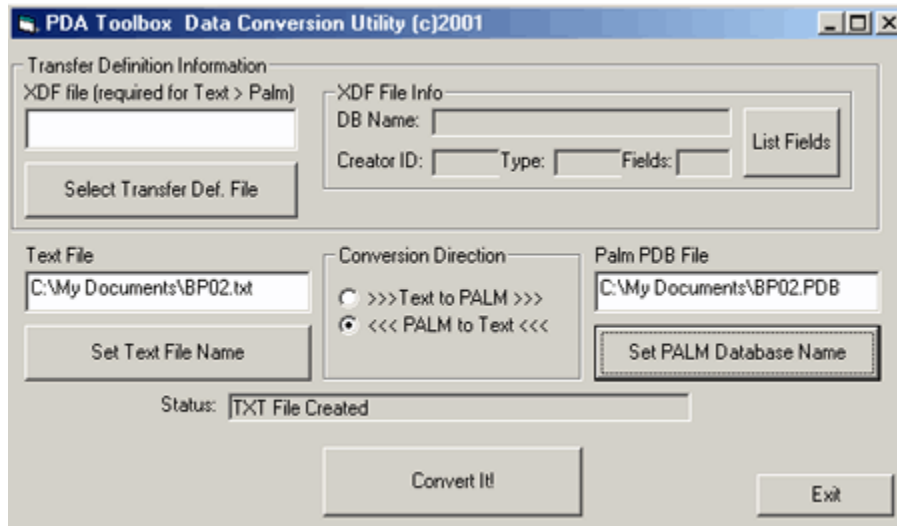
By Jared Press
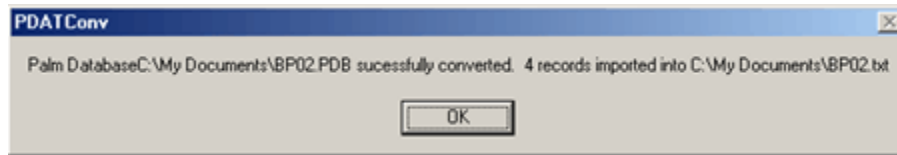
The PDA Toolbox conversion utility will convert a .pdb database file into a text file which in turn can be imported and edited in such programs as Microsoft Excel. Lets convert a .pdb file into a text file and then from a text file back into a .pdb file.

We are going to show you how to convert a .pdb file into a text file, edit the database using a text editor and then convert the modified .txt back into a ,pdb file. We'll be using one of the databases from an application called BankPass, the category database to be specific. Currently there are four categories not including the default "All" category. We are going to work with the converter to add one more category for... oh let's say American Express.
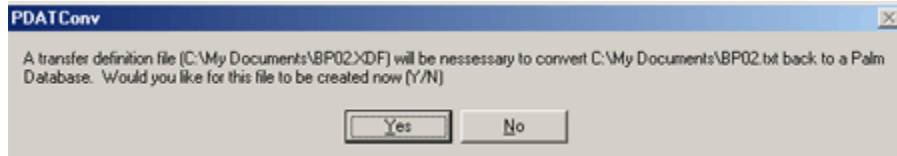

Launch the PDA Toolbox conversion utility. Now click on the "Set PALM Database Name" button to select a .pdb file to convert,. In this case I have selected a file called BP02.PDB located in the My Documents folder.

By default the converter will place the converted file in the same directory from which it was converted. You may select another directory and change the output file name by clicking the " Set Text File Name" button. For this exercise will use the default selection. When you are ready to convert your .pdb file click the "Convert It" button.
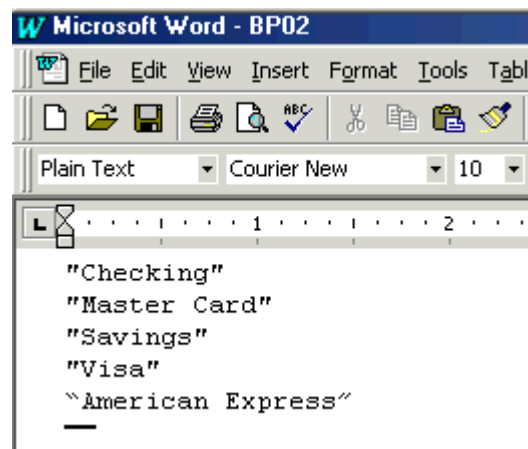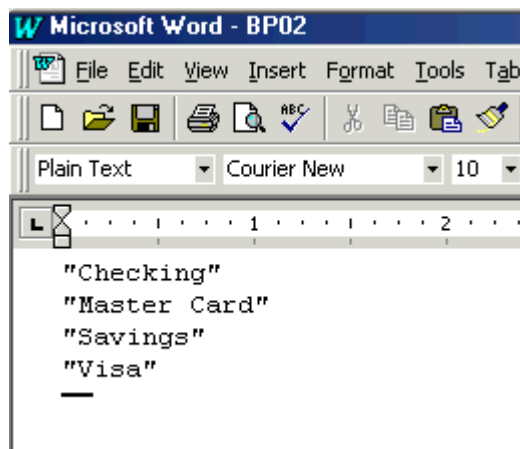
After clicking on the "Convert It" button you will be presented with two message windows. The first notifies you that the file has been converted and how many records the converted text file contains. Click "OK".

The second message window will notify you that in order to work with the converted file (convert it back to .pdb) you must create an .xdf file. This is a "transfer definition file ". This file tells the converter how to convert the .txt file back into a .pdb file. To create the vital .xdf file cick the "OK" button. You will now find three files located in the "My Documents File", the .pdb file, the .txt file and the .xdf file. Now you are ready to modify the database on your desktop.
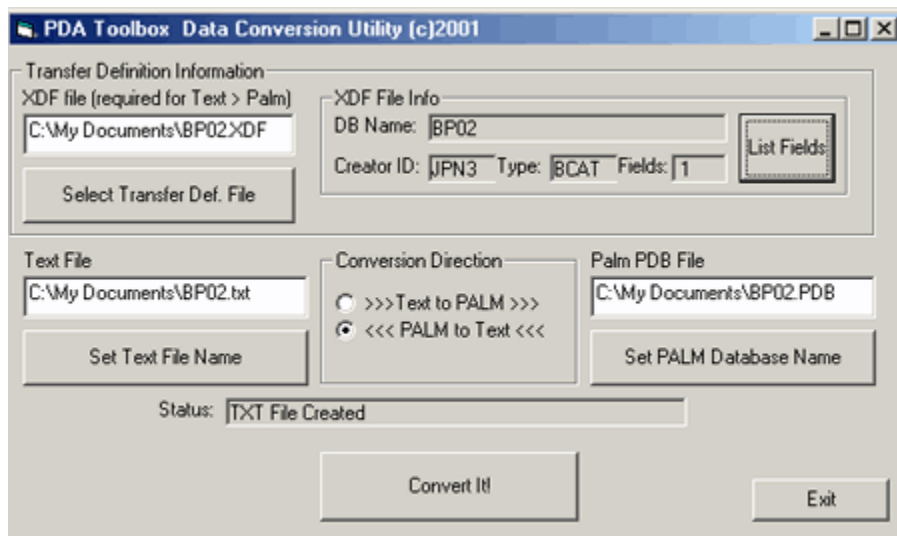

Now using a text editor, in this case Microsoft Word, we will add a category. Open the .txt file. In this case the file is very small, only four entries. Simply type in another entry as I have done. O.K, let's convert the data from the .txt back to the .pdb.
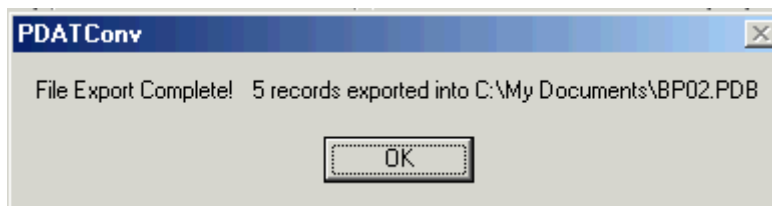
NOTE: You must take great care not to change the layout of the database information. If you do the transfer definition file, which acts as a blue print of the original database layout, won't recognize the new layout and won't properly convert the .txt file.

It is possible to change the transfer definition file (.xdf) to suit your specific needs. That however is a topic for advanced tutorials.

Launch the converter and select the transfer definition file we are using by clicking on the "Select Transfer Def. File". Doing so will auto-populate the dialog boxes as above. You will notice as well that the " XDF File Info" boxes are also populated. This gives you specific information about the .pdb file the original file was converted from. Click the "Convert It" button and a message will notify you if the transfer was successful and how many records were transferred.

Voila! The converted and modified database successfully re-installed. It is pretty simple really. The PDA Toolbox converter allows you great flexibility in working with your database files.