

# Barcode Connections



## Asset Performer Mobile

## User Guide and Technical Manual



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### Introduction

Asset Performer Mobile is a portable Barcode Data Logging System which can be used stand-alone or in conjunction with any software system which can import or export csv (comma separated values) files.

As a stand-alone system data can be managed on the scanner itself with no need to use any other hardware or software. Alternatively the scanner data can be managed via Microsoft Excel or any other software package that can manage csv data.

### Database Concepts

A database is a collection of individual items of information – these separate items of information are called *fields*.

A *record* in a database is a row of fields with a *unique identifier*. The unique identifier (also known as the *key*) is the unique field which identifies the record. So for instance, in an employee database the key could be the Employee Number or alternatively in an automobile database the key could be the registration number or the chassis number of the vehicle.

Asset Performer Mobile requires databases to have one key field – this is often a barcode or serial number.

There are many different formats of databases and Asset Performer Mobile utilises csv files as databases. This provides a means for users to easily create and edit databases as well as providing a simple interface for use with other software.

A csv file consists of fields separated by comma's. Each record is a row within the file. So an employee database in csv format might look like this:

```
Employee No,Surname,First Name,MiddleName,DOB,Start Date,Job Title
123456,Smith,John,Robert,12/06/1970,01/01/2009,Storeman
123457,Jones,Rebecca,Jane,10/03/1964,01/01/2004,Receptionist
123458,Robinson,Naomi, ,28/02/1982,01/01/2009,Administrator
```

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Note that the first line of the file is the field headings and each other line is a record in the database. The database above contains 7 fields and 3 records.

The first field in the list is the key field. Asset Performer Mobile requires the **first** field in the database to be the key field (the barcode field).

### Running AP Mobile

Asset Performer Mobile consists of just two files which can be placed in any folder on the mobile device.

The files are:

ap\_mobile.exe – the programme itself  
disposals.dpf – a file for recording disposals

Asset Performer Mobile will run on almost any Windows CE or Windows Mobile device. It can also be purchased preloaded on a Newland PT980 barcode scanner.

Switch on the scanner and after boot up double click the Asset Performer Mobile icon.



The login screen prompts you for a user name – you do not have to login with a user name (see section on automatically populating fields on page XXX for more information on user names).

For now just click the login button and you will see the main menu.

Some of the items on the menu are not available (greyed out) until you load a database.

On first use, the software contains no databases.

Our first task is to create a new database.

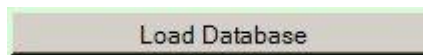
### Creating a New Database on the Scanner

Databases can be imported from existing data (e.g. spreadsheets), they can be created from scratch on your PC using Notepad or Excel or they can be created on the scanner.

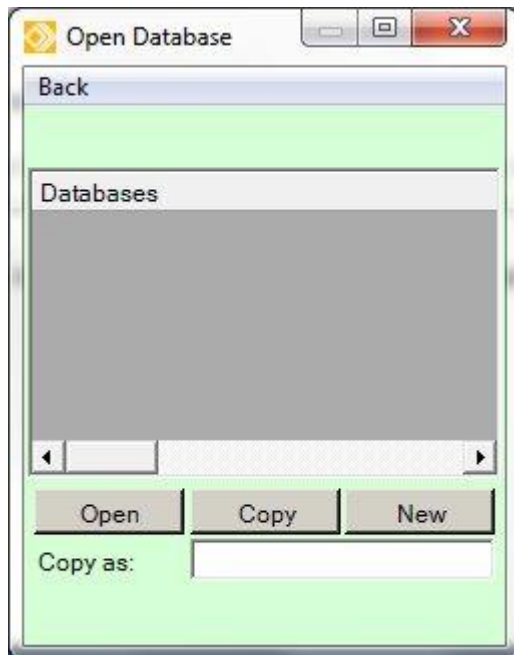
In this section we will create a simple database for tracking computer equipment using just the scanner.

### Version 1.01

From the main menu click the



button on the main menu.



The database screen will appear showing a list of databases. As you can see there are no databases in the list when you first run the programme.

Our database is going to contain the following *fields*:

- Barcode
- Item
- Make/Model
- Manufacturers Serial Number
- Location

Click the 'New' button on the Open Database Screen.

The New Database screen has two boxes – one for the database fields and one for the database name.

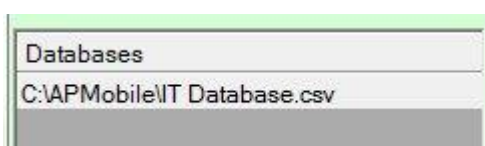
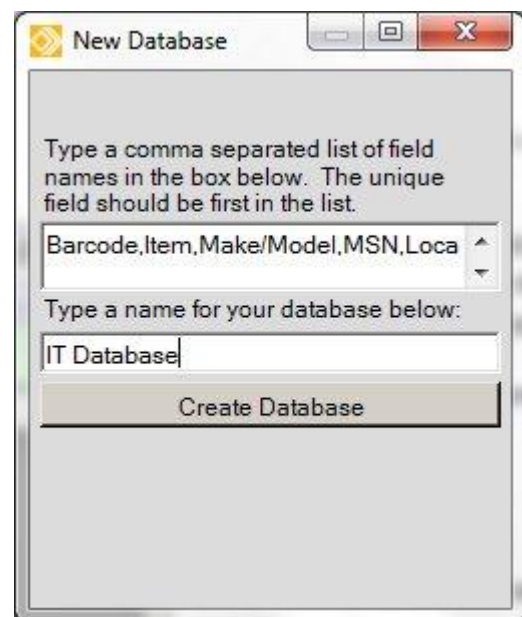
In the database fields box, list the fields above – separated by commas. The first field (Barcode) is the *key field*. DO NOT put spaces after or before the commas.

Type a name for the database in the database name box below.

Next, click the 'Create Database' button.

The programme will now create a database on the scanner with the fields you have listed.

After a confirmation message telling you that the database has been created, you will be returned to the Open Database screen.

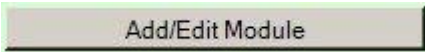


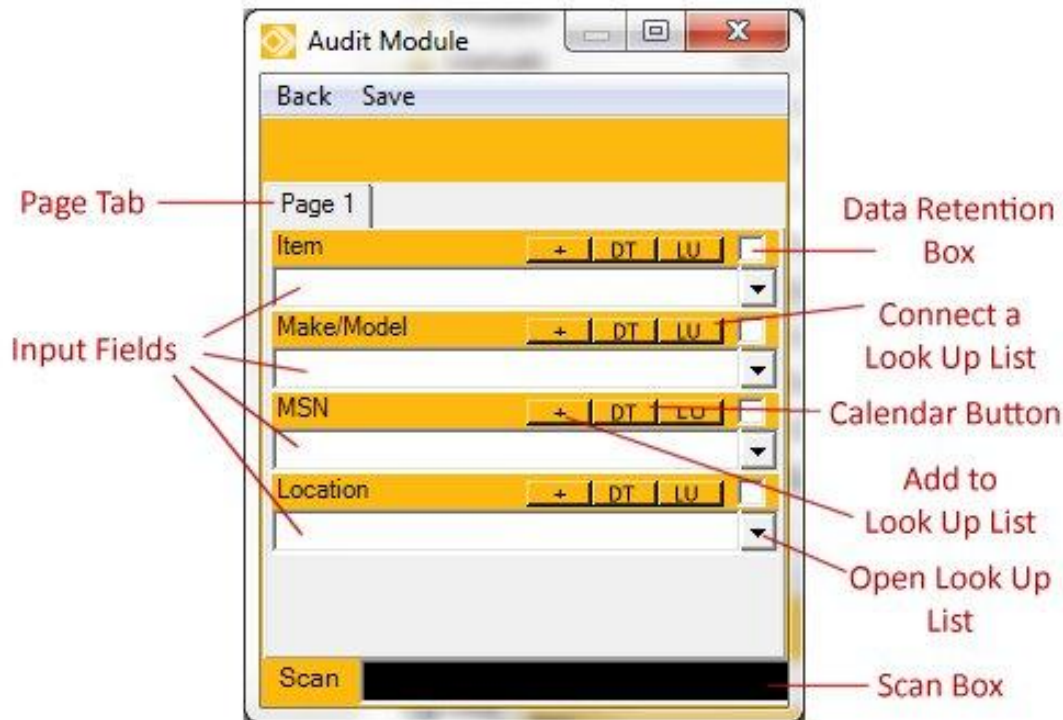
Select the database from the list and click the 'Open' button.

Your new database is loaded and ready to go!

## Adding New Items

Our first task will be to add some new items to our database – for this you will need some barcode labels (or you can use the manufacturer’s serial number on the items if they are in barcode format).

From the main menu click the  button. The Add/Edit screen will open and this is where all the scanning is done.



As you can see, the fields you designed are presented on the screen in pages (only one in our example) in the order you created them (except for the Scan Box – which appears at the bottom of every page).

We will enter our first item using the scanner’s keyboard (either the hard keyboard or the soft keyboard).

Place the cursor in the Item input field and type in the item e.g. Computer

Next place the cursor in the Make/Model field and type in the make e.g. Dell Vostro

If the manufacturer’s serial number is barcoded then scan it into the MSN input field, otherwise type it in.

Type the location into the Location input field.

Finally, place the cursor into the scan box and scan the barcode.

Once the barcode scan is completed, the item and its details will be added to the database.

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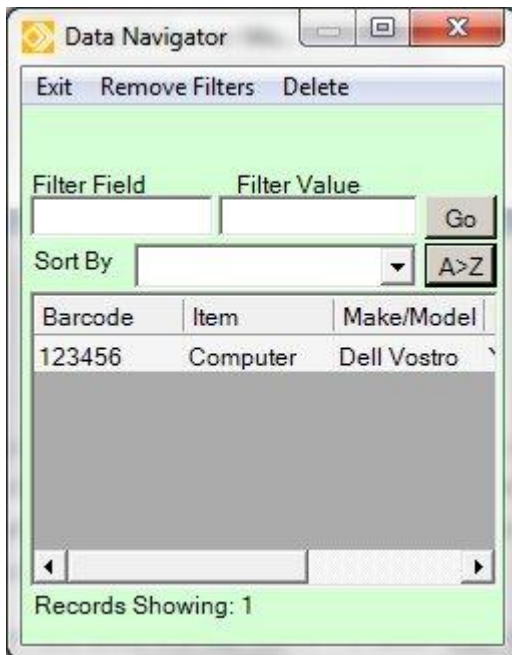
After the scan is complete, the input field boxes will be cleared ready for entering the next item. There will be times when you don't want to clear all the input boxes after a scan – e.g. you have more than one Computer to add. To stop input boxes being cleared after a scan tick the Data Retention Boxes (see diagram above) on the relevant fields.

Typing data into the input boxes will work fine but there is a faster way of achieving the same result – Look Up Tables.

Look Up Tables are simple lists containing any words or phrases which are used to populate drop down lists. Look Up Tables will be covered in the next section.

To see the data in the database first close the Add/Edit screen by clicking 'Back' in the menu (or clicking the cross in the top right corner).

Choose  from the main menu. The Data Navigator screen will appear:



This screen shows all of the items in the database – you should see the item you entered in the list, with its associated data.

We will cover the data navigator in detail in a later section.

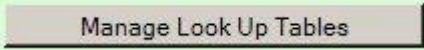
Exit the data navigator return to the Main Menu.

## Look Up Tables

Look up tables are simple lists with each item on its own separate line. A typical look up table will look something like:

Computer  
Monitor  
Printer  
Fax Machine  
Wireless Router

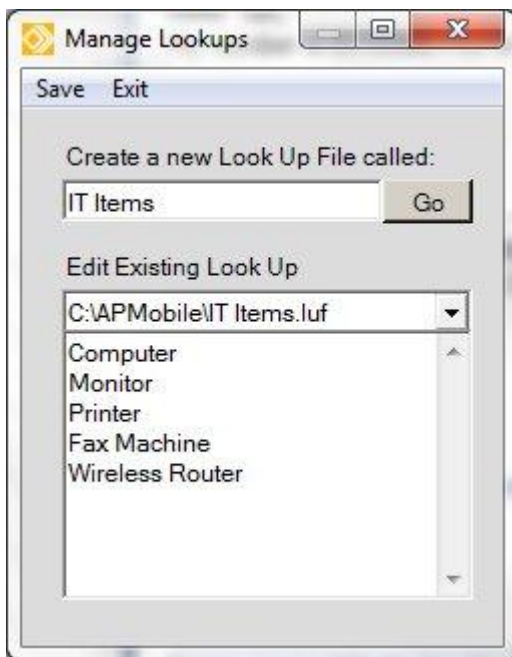
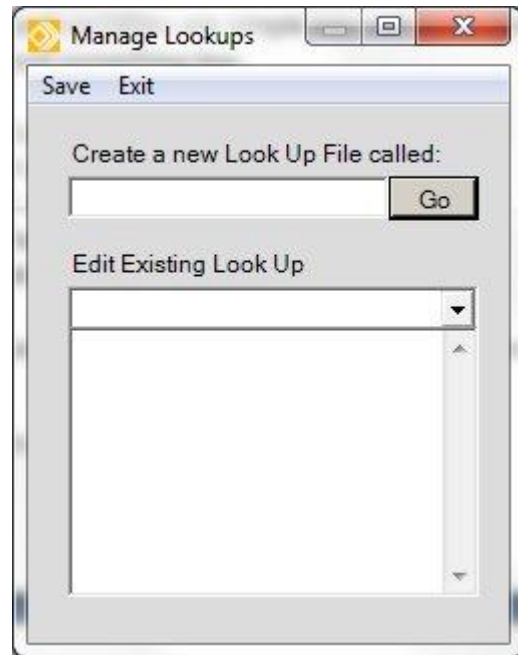
Look up tables make entering data into the database faster and more consistent.

To create a look up table click  from the main menu.

To create a look up table containing the items listed above, first of all type the name for the look up table into the top box. In this case I have called it 'IT Items' and then click the 'Go' button.

A blank look up table will be created. To view or edit this table open the drop down box and select it from the list

You can now type the items into the box and when you have finished click 'Save' from the menu.



You do not have to enter items in alphabetical order – the programme will order your items automatically.

Don't worry about entering all the items you may need in the list – you can add new items 'on the fly' when you are scanning.

Once you have saved your list exit the Manage Lookups screen.

Look up tables can be attached to any number of databases – so once they are created you can use them over and over again.

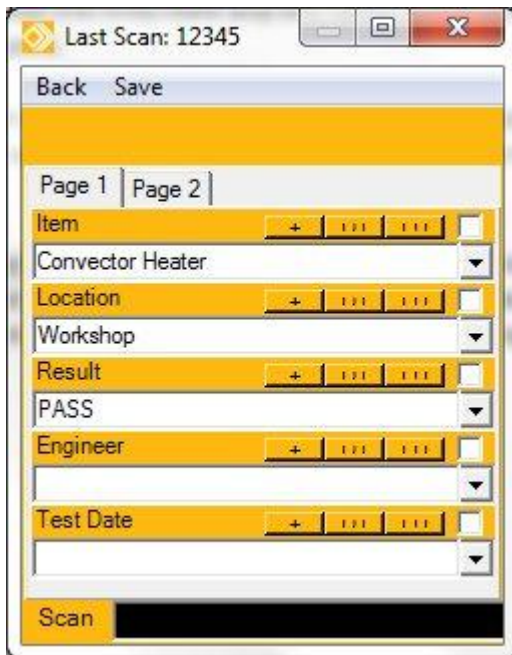
Attaching a look up table to a drop down list is simple. In the View/Edit screen click the 'Connect a Look Up List' button on the field you wish to attach the look up to. Select a look up file from the list and click the 'Open' button. The list is now attached to the drop down box. Click the arrow at the right side of the input field box and you should get a drop down list of the items in your Look Up Table.



Entering data into the field is now just a matter of selecting it from the list. This is considerably faster than typing each time.

If the item you want isn't in the list you can add it by typing the item into the Input Field Box and clicking the 'Add to Look Up List' button. This will add the new item and save it to the look up list – without you having to leave the Add/Edit screen.

You can have as many look up tables as you wish and connect them to any number of fields. You can also change the attached look up file associated with a list whilst you are in the Add/Edit screen at any time. By combining the use of look up tables with the data retention box you can make entering new items very fast and efficient.



If you have a field which expects a date you can use the Calendar button to bring up a calendar rather than type in the date manually.

So far we have looked at using the scanner to add items to the database. In the next section we are going to look at using the scanner to find a record which we can then edit and save.

### Editing Records on the Scanner

Once your database contains some items we can use the scanner to bring up their details.

Editing and viewing records in the database is done via the Add/Edit screen.

Place the cursor in the scan box and scan a barcode for an item that has been entered into the database.

The software will find the record in the database and ask you if you wish to view/edit it. Answer yes and the item details will be shown. You can now edit any of these details and save the changes by choosing 'Save' from the menu.

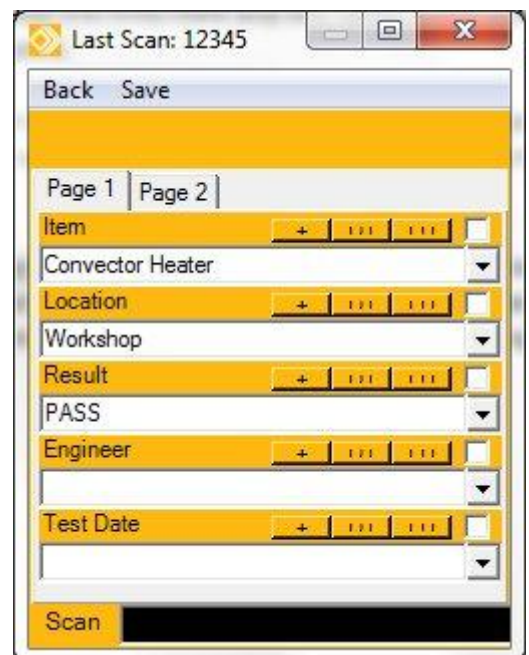
### Automating Time Stamping and User Information

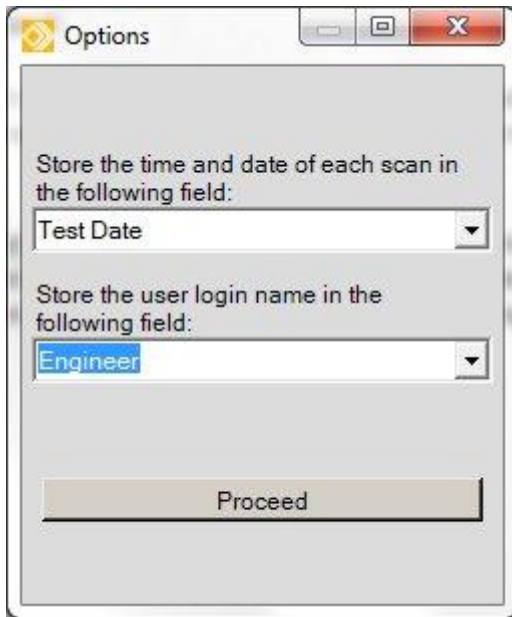
Sometimes it is very useful to add the time/date and the name of the person using the scanner to each scan. This can be automated (autofill).

Every time you scan an item or save it (if you are in edit mode) you can ask AP Mobile to put the time and date in any field you wish and also the user name. The user name comes from the initial login screen.

The screen on the right shows a simple database for recording electrical inspections.

It would be useful to put the engineers name and the date/time of the scan into the relevant fields automatically. To achieve this you need to go to the main menu and click the 'Options' button from the main menu. In the options screen choose the fields from the drop down lists that you wish to be populated automatically and click the 'Proceed' button.





**NB.** Setting the autofill options needs to be done each time you login to the system – before scanning or editing items. Unlike the look up table attachments and the retained data settings the autofill options are not remembered by the system. If you are using autofill then set the options each time as soon as you have loaded a database.

Once the autofill options are set the system will populate your fields automatically. Autofill will happen when you are adding new items to the database (on scanning) and when you edit a record (when you click 'Save' in the menu).

The screen below shows the result of me saving the record with the above autofill options .

### Viewing Data on the Scanner

To view data on the scanner use the 'View Data' button from the main menu.

The View Data screen will show you how many records are in the database and allow you to scroll through each record. You can also order the columns in any way you wish using the 'Sort By' Button.

If you wish to filter the records then select a field in the record list and it will appear in the filter box at the top of the screen, then click the 'Go' button. The database will now only show the filtered records.

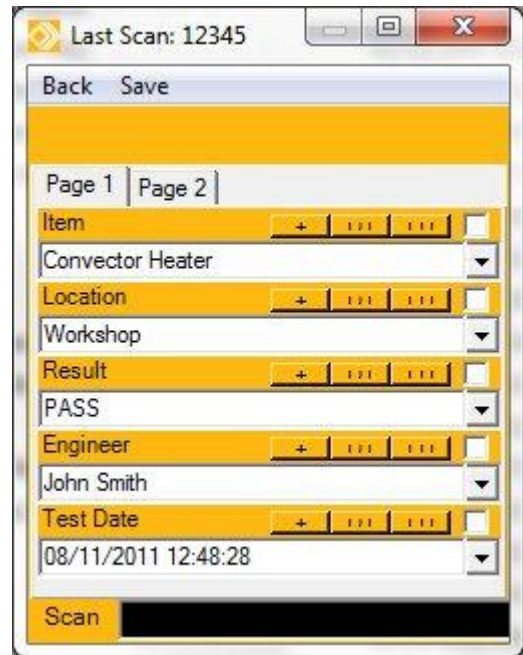
Filtering records is useful when you wish to see for example all the items in a room or all items not yet tested.

To delete a record from the database choose the record in the data window and select 'Delete' from the menu.

### Disposals

The disposals can be recorded in two ways:

The simple way is to create fields in your database to record disposal details (e.g. Disposal Date, Reason etc.).



Another way is to use the onboard Disposal File. The disposal file (disposals.dpf) is a text based list with five fields – Barcode, Disposal Date, Reason, User and Date/Time. This file can be used stand-alone or for it's main purpose which is to integrate into other software (such as Asset Performer Desktop or Asset Performer Online).

### **Connecting the Scanner to a PC**

Although the software can be operated entirely on a scanner it is useful to connect to a PC – there are many reasons:

1. So that the data can be further processed via external programmes such as Excel
2. To load data to the scanner from existing data sources
3. To integrate with existing systems and software
4. To back up your data

Connecting to a PC will vary depending on which operating system your PC uses.

To connect to Windows XP you will need to load Activesync (if it's not already loaded). This can be downloaded from Microsoft's website. Follow the on screen instructions to set up a partnership between the scanner and Windows.

To connect to Vista or Windows 7 you will need to load Windows Mobile Device Centre This can be downloaded from Microsoft's website (at the time of going to press, Microsoft's website only has a version for Vista – but this will work with the Windows 7 operating systems). Follow the on screen instructions to set up a partnership between the scanner and Windows.

### **Deleting Databases**

There are two ways to delete a database:

On the Scanner: Go to 'My Device' or File Explorer and navigate to the csv file and delete it.

Via a PC: Connect the scanner to your PC via the USB cable and using 'My Computer' navigate to the mobile device and delete the file.

When deleting a database you will also need to delete the associated configuration file – it will have the same name as the database but will have a .cfg file extension

## Technical Specification

### ***Minimum Hardware Requirement:***

Windows CE (Version 5 or later)  
Windows Mobile (version 6 or later)

### ***File Formats:***

Databases (.csv) – Comma Separated Values with Filed Names in first row

Look Up Tables (.luf) – Plain text files with each item on its own line

Configuration Files (.cfg) – Plain text files storing database information such as where look up tables are attached. Each database when it is first run will create a configuration file with the same name as the database but with a .cfg file extension.

Disposal File (.dpf) – Plain text file for keeping a record of disposed items.

## **Barcode Connexions**

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