

Markbook History

SMPCS has been producing teacher markbooks and gradebooks since 1991. Teacher's Personal Markbook is latest software in a long line that includes:

- MarkBook 3
- MarkBook IV
- MarkBook FIVE
- SM-Marks
- SM-Marks 2

The first gradebook program was long before Windows XP, even before Windows 95. Markbook 3 was written back before Microsoft Windows was popular, back when DOS based computers were standard.

This may not seem relevant to you today when you are using Windows Vista or XP, but what it means is that the developer of Teacher's Personal Markbook has over 19 years experience developing markbooks and gradebooks and has a proven track record of continual support and improvement.

Below are some sample screen images of these earlier programs with a few comments for your interest. MarkBook 3

This gradebook program was the first to be commercially sold in 1991. Although Windows 3.1 was released later that year most PCs still relied on DOS based applications that were "character based" with the screen arranged in fixed columns and rows of characters in a fixed font.

Markbook 3 only used the keyboard and a mouse could not be used to control the program. There was no print preview, so you had to send the pages to the printer to see what you would get.

- The calculations type were in the Transform menu - named as such because the commands transform the marks. Simple pull down menus were a feature on the interface.

- Simple statistics were available for a column - which didn't include the median - which with hindsight is a surprising omission.

MarkBook IV

This gradebook program followed the previous markbook with a slightly more sophisticated interface which allowed a mouse to be used, as was an increasing expectation in 1992.

- Along the bottom of the screen you can see an increased amount of information presented with common commands always visible in Yellow to allow easy selection with the mouse.

- Only a single copy of MarkBook IV exists here and the password has long been lost. This screen is the furthest we have been able to get into the program.

MarkBook FIVE

This gradebook program was the last DOS based markbook produced and it followed the conventions of largely using the mouse to control menus and dialogue boxes. Unlike previous markbooks, this one included a print preview (which up until that release had been the number one requested feature). Proper graphs could also be drawn.

Although only DOS application, the user interface used TurboVision to include resizable windows and many features expected at a time when Windows 3.1 was finally accepted.

- The print preview switched the program to graphics mode and gave a fairly accurate representation of the printed page. As an improvement over previous markbooks this one properly supported PostScript and HPPCL (LaserJet) printers.

- Dialogue boxes were standard for most commands and used the mouse, Enter, Esc and Tab keys as you would expect.

SM-Marks

This gradebook program is the first transition to a Windows application. Here it is shown running on Windows 3.1. This is recognisable as an ancestor of Teacher's Personal Markbook and it looks quite different from the previous markbooks.

With the change to Windows, major changes were made to the command structure which annoyed many long-time users.

- A toolbar with icons is almost compulsory for any modern Windows application, and SM-Marks is no exception.

- The Calculation Helper (now called Assistant) was introduced which makes many of the commonly required calculations much easier to do.

SM-Marks 2

This gradebook program is a full 32 bit application. The previous SM-Marks was only 16 bit, so while it could run quite effectively on Windows 95/98, as Windows progressed to 2000 and XP an update was required.

- The icons and general look was freshened up to fit in better on a modern Windows desktop.

- The Print preview was now integrated into the main program Window, which prevents the sometimes problem of a program window getting "lost" on the Desktop.

Teacher's Personal Markbook

Now with Teacher's Personal Markbook, what started as a DOS based markbook 17 years ago is still going strong on Windows 7. It has been a long journey, and one with no sign of ending as we plan what the markbook of the future will look like.