

New MUGPAL Software: Victory Programmer Environment

by Ed Hinkle

In order to understand why the Victory Programmer Environment (VPE) was developed, we need to consider a little MUMPS history. The M standard defines the commands, functions, special variables, and other characteristics of the language. It does not, however, define a broad, standard programmer's environment (this situation is so loose that the commands to load, edit, and save a routine were never even standardized). As a result, over the years this part of M has been very open to interpretation. While some M vendors provide much richer programming environments than others, what is missing in every case is a standard.

For example, in some implementations the user invokes a global lister by entering %G, in others, %GL, etc. Some implementations offer full screen editors, while others provide only the most basic of routine editors. Nearly all vendors have their own way of displaying system status, routine and global directories, etc.

The VPE is much more than traditional programmer mode. While adding features, it attempts to standardize the programmer environment by creating it with standard code, whenever possible. When vendor-specific features are needed, they are hidden and every attempt is made to duplicate the functionality in each implementation.

The VPE provides a rich environment for programmers, verifiers, support staff, and others who frequently work in programmer mode. The modules of the VPE are VGlobal Lister/Editor, VRoutine Reader, VRoutine Editor, VElectronic Data Dictionary, VShell, and VKernel.

Contrary to its name, VPE is not only for programmers. Many people perform technical tasks from programmer mode because it is so powerful. Think of VPE as "enhanced" programmer mode and then you will see that it is ideal for anyone who regularly operates in programmer mode.

VPE is effective if you seldom use programmer mode or if you live in programmer mode! How can this be true? Because the person who only

occasionally uses programmer mode has a hard time remembering the names of the various system routines. VPE makes them readily available and consistent across implementations. The person who lives in programmer mode will appreciate the keystroke savings and the ability to customize the shell. Wherever you fall in this spectrum, VPE can be useful to you.

The VPE routines are designed to function in the presence or absence of either the VA File Manager or the VA Kernel software. In some situations, the presence of the Kernel or File Manager makes the VPE software easier to use.

VPE software comes with extensive online help plus the manual, *What Programmer Mode Should Have Been*. It is available through MUGPAL to MTA members for \$50 (plus shipping and handling) on 3 1/2" 720K disks (media D). ■

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To order Victory Programmer Environment and a catalog featuring all the software and publications available from MTA, phone 301-431-4070.