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Booking It

Hanon W. Russell

Bookup 2000 Professional, CD-ROM Database Management System, Bookup Corp., \$199.00

About a dozen or so years ago we happened to come across a DOS-based program that offered some interesting possibilities for preparation and study, particularly for openings. It basically allowed the user to create a customized opening database and use it quickly and easily for preparation and study. The assimilation of software and computers into the chess world was just beginning and these kinds of databases and programs were regarded more as curiosities than tools.



However, as we all know, the programs and computers became better and stronger, and now there are few players who do not have some kind of computer assistance. We are told that the top GMs are able to review hundreds of games as they prepare for a single tournament encounter and special computer-assisted tournaments are even held.

Every so often we wonder what all this electronic firepower might be able to do for mere mortals such as we. Do we truly have to grapple with and figure out how to harness the awesome power of Chess Assistant? Might there not be something out there designed for us? There is. Enter Bookup.

Perhaps the main reason we were initially attracted to Bookup was its ability to create a custom opening database. Like most players, we have a limited opening repertoire that we try to learn quite well. Keeping it updated while maintaining ease of review can at times be problematic.

Bookup comes with a brief but clear instruction manual. Many



users will find the program so user-friendly, however, that it may not be necessary to refer to it. We installed the Windows version of Bookup from the CD easily; the technical requirements are minimal. The latest version works as well on an older 133mhz machine as it does on a 1000mhz screamer. Moves are entered and databases created almost intuitively. Create a new database (a “book”), name it and you are in business. The program allows moves to be entered quickly and handles variations and sub-variations (“branches”) effortlessly. Moreover, if a position is reached that is already in the database, it identifies the transposition and brings up all the prior analysis. This is a tremendous feature regardless of what openings you play; it is invaluable if you play or study something like the English or Reti.



But we have just scratched the surface. Data that has been collected may be printed out in PGN format or in ECO-similar column format; with the help of most basic graphic programs, diagrams may be easily created (Secret: Most diagrams online at ChessCafe.com are created using Bookup!); games and databases that are already in PGN format may be imported to create a new database in Bookup; databases may be combined (nice for pulling your entire opening repertoire together); and even specific positions may be created – we once programmed the entire contents of our favorite endgame book into Bookup – shades of the [ChessCafe Reader](http://ChessCafe.com)!

The program includes the powerful computer playing program Crafty and will interface with several others. There is a “comments” window where narrative text and annotations may be entered to supplement moves, which in turn may have Informant-like assessment symbols appended.



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There are many other features, but one of the most perplexing – and useful – is called “backsolving”. Backsolving is one of the most sophisticated and unique features of Bookup and one of the least understood. With the help of the Bookup manual, let’s try to explain this feature.

Suppose you have a game database such as Chess Assistant and in it you find 97 grandmaster games with 12.Ng5 in your favorite opening.






	Games	White Wins	Draws	Black Wins
12 Ng5	97	51.5%	31.0%	17.5%
12 Bd2	61	34.3%	32.7%	32.7%
12 h3	3	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%

The game tree tells you that about 51% of the games were won by White, 31% were drawn and 17% were won by Black. Because you play the White side, the move 12.Ng5 starts to look very attractive...

But wait, you look closely at the games and find that grandmasters have been playing 12.Bd2 for the past three years instead of 12.Ng5, even though 12.Bd2 shows only a 34% winning percentage for White. What's going on?

You look further into the games and find that in just two key games Black has found a way to completely neutralize 12.Ng5 and even get a slight advantage! Naturally after those games were published, grandmasters gave up on Ng5 for White. So the game tree statistics would have lured you into a bad position!

Backsolving does this research for you and it makes it obvious when game statistics and current chess theory contradict each other. Here’s what the candidates might look like after importing the grandmaster games into Bookup for and then backsolving.

 g5		202 -131
 d2		55 +20
h3		17 +5

The backsolving process was able to show that with best play by both sides, Black could achieve a slight advantage. This book was also analyzed by a playing program and the score of -131 means the computer agrees with this assessment. Down the 12.Ng5 line it is now easy to see the Black moves that keep the edge

Backsolving can also show you where the bulk of the positions are in the tree of analysis. Looking at the candidates from Bookup, 202 positions are recorded beyond 12.Ng5 while only 17 positions are stored after 12.h3. Of course, even though more analysis appears after 12.Ng5 it is no longer the main line - White would rather play a move that leads to an unclear or equal position.

We could go on, but the best recommendation that we can offer is that this is the program that inspired the popular **ChessCafe Reader** electronic book program. With the help of Mike “The Database Man” Leahy, Bookup’s prince of programming, we were able to create the extremely popular CCR.

Bookup is one great program. And you don’t have to take our word for it. Try it out for size. Download the “lite” version at: <http://www.bookup.com/lite.htm> . If you decide you like it, you are also in luck – the full version is the Special of the Week December 19-25. ‘Nuff said...

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