



COLUMNISTS

ChessBase Cafe

Mig Greengard



Advanced Questions

Being a deadline addict means skipping some of the tougher reader questions that come in every week. Trial and error experimentation is a drag compared to answering how to make colored squares and arrows for the 10th time. By now a few good ones have accumulated, along with my guilt, so it's into the depths this week. I'll try my best to make the answers broad enough to be useful to everyone.

Fritz 9 is upon us, and my next column will likely be dedicated to its new training features. If you have questions and comments about it, now is the time to send them in.

The E-mailbag

Question I have Shredder 9 and my question is about "Friend Mode." I like the idea that the computer tries to play as strong (or in my case, as weak) as me. Obviously, it does this through one's past history/performance against the computer.

I want to introduce a new user (my son), and is it possible to have two (or more) "profiles"? I know there's a "User Info," but I think that's just for the chatter and all. Is that the case, or will changing the username there also bring up a new "profile"?

That way, my son will play against Shredder's Friend Mode at his strength, and I can play against the computer at my strength. **Alfred Racho (Philippines)**

Answer The Fritz 8 family, which includes Shredder 9, doesn't maintain separate profiles for Friend Mode or anything else. You can set the strength of Friend Mode each time you use it, but of course this defeats the purpose of the clever automatic adjustment feature. As you surmised, the User Info doesn't help either. Logging in a different person has no effect on the strength of the Friend Mode.

A couple of suggestions: Windows XP has a multi-user feature that can automatically track separate program installations. (Control Panel – User

Accounts) Having Shredder installed once for each user should work. (I haven't actually tried this with Shredder, but have seen it work with other programs.) This is probably better than trying to install Shredder twice under the same user profile, although this is possible by installing it a second time into a different folder.

Question I tried to follow your instructions for making an opening report. After the report is generated I have the initial board position, the opening report and the book database. Reviewing the report everything works fine and I can link to games from the report text.

The problem I am having is that once I save the report and database book file, when I re-open the book and database I cannot link to the games. Do I need to save the book tree a certain way or to a certain location or do I need to create a link to get to these games? **Jeff (Australia)**

Answer The games are linked to where they are in your reference database, not in the book/tree file, which doesn't keep game info, just the moves. When you save an opening report text, you have two options under the File menu. One is to save into your reference database, which is the default option. That means the text will be in the same database as the games, and all the links should be fine.

Or you can choose "Save Text As" and save it into a database other than your reference DB. When you do this, it will ask if you also want to export the games along with it. (In my English installation it asks me in German, one of the few rogue German items that pop up every once in a while.) If you do this, all the games listed in the report will be copied to the database where you are saving the opening report. Then your links will work.

There can be a little additional confusion because there is a small bug when you save a report into a file and choose not to export the games with it. Sometimes a link will open another game from the database instead of saying "hey, the game's not here because you didn't export it!" So the two solutions are to either always save your opening reports into your reference database or to always export the games when you save it elsewhere.

Question I have a question regarding database management in Fritz 8. I understand that the options are rather limited compared to CB, but at present I am happy with what Fritz provides, including the option to update free (e.g. TWIC) with all the recent games. Is it possible however to sort the database games, or select large numbers of games for editing etc? I just went through rearranging 25K+ games manually and it was quite a pain. A final question: when Fritz 9 comes out, is there an option for upgrading for current Fritz 8 users? **Thomas Birdas (USA)**

Answer Nope, they've got you there. Sorting games is even listed in the Fritz Help file under "things ChessBase can do that Fritz can't nyah-nyah" section. CB9 can even save the sort order so the database is permanently reconfigured,

a very handy feature that wasn't possible in CB8.

If you need to move some games around in Fritz you can use the clipboard to copy them from one database and then paste them into a new database in the order you want. Slow going, but a lot faster than saving each game one at a time to a new database. You can also try exporting the database as PGN (text) by creating a new PGN database and using the ChessBase clipboard to paste the games into it. Then you can copy-paste the text from window to window in your word processing program, but if you've got a lot of games you have to wonder how much your time is actually worth!

As for upgrade options, that depends on the seller since there is no upgrade version of Fritz 9 that I am aware of. You can ask the fine folks at **ChessCafe**: info@chesscafe.com.

Question Will Fritz 9 have the same memory feature as Shredder 9? e.g. In a position that Shredder evaluates = then five minutes later it goes +-, then you go forward then back one move, Shredder is supposed to remember the +- assessment instead of taking another 5 minutes to find the winning combination. Does Fritz do this too? **Lin Zhigen (Australia)**

Answer This isn't really a unique feature of the Shredder engine, but a natural function of what we call hashtables. These are all the positions the program keeps in memory while it analyzes so it doesn't waste time looking at the same position twice (or a hundred times) in different variations. All the ChessBase engines, including Fritz 8 and 9, use hashtables and will "remember" an evaluation as long as the position is still in its memory.

I don't know if Shredder makes better use of hashtables or they just wanted to highlight this feature, which is less a feature than a handy side-effect of hashtable usage from what I can tell. You can even jump ahead in a position and then go back and it will immediately remember its evaluation unless the hashtables have been filled in the new position, pushing that old evaluation out of memory. How long that takes largely depends on the size of your hashtables, although other factors such as the type of position and the speed of your processor also affect it.

As for how many megabytes of hashtables are best, this is a long story with little relevance to 99% of users with a computer that isn't ancient. Theoretically, more is better for normal playing conditions. Some say having smaller tables is actually better at blitz time controls. Leave them at 128MB unless you need the memory for other programs or really want to maximize strength to the final tiny detail. Setting them to the maximum allowed will slow the rest of your system considerably. (You can do this automatically by going to Game – Levels – Optimize strength.)

If your system has less than 256 MB system memory, you'll probably want to use 64 if you are using other programs at the same time. In Fritz you can change the hashtable size under Engine – Change Engine (F3). In ChessBase

it's under Tools – Options – Engines – Browse.

All the ChessBase software described by Mig in this column, as well as many more ChessBase programs, are available in the [ChessCafe Online Catalog](#).

Mig wants your questions!! Send it along and perhaps it will be answered in an upcoming column. Please include your name and country of residence. [Yes, I have a question for Mig!](#)



[TOP OF PAGE](#)



[HOME](#)



[COLUMNS](#)



[LINKS](#)



[ARCHIVES](#)



[ABOUT THE
CHESS CAFE](#)

[\[ChessCafe Home Page\]](#) [\[Book Review\]](#) [\[Columnists\]](#)

[\[Endgame Study\]](#) [\[The Skittles Room\]](#) [\[Archives\]](#)

[\[Links\]](#) [\[Online Bookstore\]](#) [\[About ChessCafe.com\]](#) [\[Contact Us\]](#)

Copyright 2005 CyberCafes, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

"**The Chess Cafe®**" is a registered trademark of Russell Enterprises, Inc.