Account Extensions
Additional notes

Précis

These comments are purely a few additional things that are not mentioned in the "*Writing extensions for Account*" document.

Using the screen

When an extension is active, it has the right to do whatever it likes with the screen.
The CSV export plots a fake status dialogue in the centre of the existing screen, while the graphing utility clears the screen to display the selected graph.
Upon returning from your extension, *Account* will redraw the screen, so feel free to use it as you see fit.

User Interface considerations

Some other points to note about the user interface:

* By convention, any dialogues that you may display should overlay the existent screen (i.e. the account list); you should not clear the screen first.
  Doing it like this will make your extension seem more integrated with the *Account* software.

* You should not write, flash up, or otherwise display copyright messages. Any such information should be contained within the documentation.

* If it is possible that your display will need to be refreshed, the *Account* convention is to use the `Diamond` **key to refresh.**

* You are free to provide menus and/or help as required.

* You should *not* make use of `Acorn-X` (or `Psion-X`), nor should you use the "STOP" instruction to finish execution.
  If you run into an error situation, either handle it (i.e. "please insert SSD"), or report the error and "RETURN" from the extension.

* *No* information is to be altered or erased unless the user is completely aware that their actions will result in their account data being changed.
  The methodology for adding and/or modifying account entries is not described in the "*Writing extensions for Account*" document. If you wish to provide this functionality, please contact me for details.

Licensing

You are free to 'licence' your extension module, and to request a registration fee. Please note, however, that doing so contravenes the ethos of *Account* and the *PB2* website…

Code considerations

Some points to note, with regard to the code, are:

* **If you return non-zero (error), then *Account* will report that an error occurred. Therefore it is likely that you would prefer to report the specifics of the error itself, and then return zero (okay).**
  The only time you would want to return non-zero is if the failure is during the *initialise* procedure; in this way the *do* procedure will be skipped.

* **The *finalise* procedure is always called.**

* **There is no requirement to do anything in the *initialise* or *finalise* procedures.**
  Of all of my utilities, none of them do anything in the *initialise* procedure, and those that access files set up a flag to determine if the file should be 'closed' in the *finalise* procedure (as a 'catch' for abnormal exits).
  All of my processing, including setup and getting information from the user, takes place in the *do* procedure.

Other stuff

You should make it clear in your documentation that I (Rick Murray) provide no support for your extension module, and an email address (and optionally postal address and/or MSNM ID and/or website) where you may be contacted…

Rick, 2006/11/05
May I set fire to Tony Blair now?