

Batch Importing of Classified Data (4.2)

1 Introduction

The SunType Classified System's import utility is a program that can read a text file of marked-up accounts, ads and credit-card payments and create matching ads, payments and accounts in the classified database. It may be used to import ads extracted from another classified system, downloaded from a bulletin board or on-line service or compiled using the classified system's own report generator. The program allows precise control of ad, payment and account creation and can translate classification numbers while importing.

The import utility is a separately sold option for the classified system. It will typically require technical setup work to accommodate each site's import needs. That setup work will require knowledge of the classified system and the classified procedures in use on-site. Also required is the general technical expertise to edit or create DOS batch routines with conditional execution.

The import program reads two text files: a setup file and the data import file. The setup file specifies basic import parameters and defaults. The import file must contain the actual accounts, ads and credit-card payments for import in a specified format that marks the particular fields or variables that make up an insertion order.

The program adds the import information to a classified database. It also writes out a text file of records that it rejected due to missing or incorrect data.

This document contains three major sections. The first details the format of the setup file. The second describes the required format of the record import text file. The last tells how to run the import program.

2 The Setup File

The import program looks for a setup file named stimport.dat. That file may contain the following text parameters:

KeywordArguments

Account Defaults

CREDIT	[OK A NO C]
TERM	[LONG TRAN EXT]
BOOKKEEPING	[OPEN BAL]
POSTING	[NORM INC]
USERDEF1	[A-Z]
USERDEF2	[A-Z]
SELLER	0-99
MEMO	string
ADR1	string
ADR2	string
ADR3	string

Ad Defaults

EDITIONS	{[A-Z]}
SPECIALS	{[A-Q]}
RATE	0-99
ZONE	0-255
INSERTS	1-255
STARTDATE	date
STARTOFFSET	offset
NOTE	string

STARTTITLE string
 ENDTITLE string
 CLASS 1-9999
 CHARGE [Y|T|N|F]
 SORT [ALLRAND|RANDOM|ALPHA|NUMER|NEW|OLD|SHORT|LONG]
 ADDVOICE n/a
 VTEMPLATE string

Account Segmentation

ADD [BYNAME|BYPHONE|BYADNO|ATTHRESH]
 THRESHOLD #0-500

Card Payment

CARDTYPE [A|B|C|D|E]
 CHECKCARD n/a

Automatic Queuing

ADQUEUE string
 ACCTQUEUE string
 CARDQUEUE string

Classification Number Translation

TCLASS from# to#

The meaning of these keywords and their arguments are described in the remainder of this section.

2.1 Account Defaults

CREDIT [OK|A|NO|C]

Used to set the credit status for all accounts created while importing ads. Use “OK” or “A” for OK credit and “NO” or “C” for no credit. If this parameter is not specified, the classified system default is used.

TERM [LONG|TRAN|EXT]

Used to set the term for all accounts created while importing ads. Specify “LONG” for long-term, “TRANS” for transient or “EXT” for external. If this parameter is not specified, the classified system default is used.

BOOKKEEPING [OPEN|BAL]

Used to set the basic bookkeeping method for all accounts created while importing ads. Specify “OPEN” for open-item, “BAL” for balance-forward. If this parameter is not specified, the classified system default is used.

POSTING [NORM|INC]

Used to set the posting method for all accounts created while importing ads. Specify “NORM” for normal, lump-sum posting or “INC” for incremental. If this parameter is not specified, the classified system default is used.

USERDEF1 [A-Z]

USERDEF2 [A-Z]

Used to set the values of user-defined fields one and two for all accounts created while importing ads. If this parameter is not specified, the classified system default is used.

SELLER 0-99

Used to set the value of the account seller field for all accounts created while importing ads.

MEMO string

Used to set the contents of the account memo field for all accounts created while importing ads.

NAME

Sets a last name for accounts created while importing ads. If the imported ads contain “@NAME:” codes, these names will override the name specified in the parameter file.

PHONE

Sets a phone number for accounts created while importing ads. If the imported ads contain “@PHONE:” codes, these names will override the name specified in the parameter file.

ADR1, ADR2, ADR3

Sets address lines one, two and three for accounts created while importing ads. If the imported ads contain “@ADR1:”, “@ADR2:” or “@ADR3:” codes, these names will override the name specified in the parameter file

2.2 Ad Defaults

EDITIONS {[A-Z]}

Used to specify the editions in which imported ads are qualified to run. Whether or not ads run in particular editions will depend on the “INSERTS” parameter and “@REPEATS” specified for individual ads. For example,

```
EDITIONS ABC
```

will qualify all imported ads for placements in editions A, B and C.

SPECIALS {[A-Q]}

Used to specify the special charges or discounts which should be set for all imported ads. For example,

```
SPECIALS GK
```

will set specials G and K on for all imported ads.

RATE 0-99

Determines the rate table used for all imported ads.

ZONE 0-255

Sets the zone for imported ads for sites running the zone option. If the zone is not specified, zone zero will be used.

INSERTS 1-255

Sets a default insert count for imported ads. This parameter may be overridden for individual ads with the “@REPEATS” code. Note that this is the total number of inserts in all qualified editions — *not* the inserts *per* edition.

STARTDATE MO/DY/YR

Use this command to specify a default start date other than today. (The program will actually pick the first valid publication date on or after the specified date.)

STARTOFFSET offset

Use this command to specify a number of days to add or subtract to the current date to pick a default start date. (The program will actually pick the first valid publication date on or after the specified date.) For example,

```
STARTOFFSET 7
```

Adds seven days to the current date to figure a candidate default start date.

NOTE string

Sets a default string for the ad note field. For example:

```
NOTE Ads from the BBS
```

Causes the string “Ads from the BBS” to be placed in the note field of each imported ad.

STARTTITLE string

ENDTITLE string

Many publications embolden or center the first line of an ad to make it a title. The “STARTTITLE” and “ENDTITLE” parameters allow you to set up code or macro strings that will be prepended and appended to the first line of each imported ad.

For example, if you specify:

```
STARTTITLE \A
ENDTITLE \B
```

Then an ad with the first line “Electrician Needed” will import as “\AElectrician Needed\B”. If macros \A and \B turn on and off centering and bolding and \B includes a paragraph break, then every first line becomes a title.

CLASS 1-9999

Sets a default class for imported ads. This parameter may be overridden on an ad-by-ad basis with the “@CLASS” code.

CHARGE [Y|T|N|F]

Determines whether or not the import program computes charges for ads as it imports them. Set charge to “Y” or “T” to compute charges.

SORT [ALLRAND|RANDOM|ALPHA|
NUMER|NEW|OLD|SHORT|LONG]

Sets a sort criteria for imported ads. If this parameter is not specified, the classified system default is used.

ADDVOICE

If this line is present, the import program will add voice boxes to imported ads. Voice box information will be recorded in the account record and added to the end of ad texts.

VTEMPLATE=string

If “ADDVOICE” is used, you may use VTEMPLATE to specify the text template used to add voice box information to ad texts. In the template, use the character “^” to mark where the box number should be inserted, “~” to mark the voice box expiration insertion point and “_” to mark where the ad expiration date might be inserted. For example:

```
VTemplate= Voice Box #^, expires __.
```

would cause the insertion of something like “Voice Box #12345, expires 3/15.” to be inserted. (Use “=” for an insert space in templates.)

If VTEMPLATE is not specified, the voice box template designated for the ad zone will be used.

2.3 Classification Number Translation

TCLASS from# to#

Imported ads may contain classification number information from the originating system that may not match your classification numbering scheme. The “TCLASS” directive allows you to setup one-to-one mappings between the classification numbers in the import file and the ones on your classified system. For example:

```
TCLASS 300 7550
```

directs that imported ads with an “@CLASS: 300” code will be placed in class number 7550 on your system.

You may use as many TCLASS directive lines as necessary to map the translation. Both “from” and “to” numbers must be limited to four or fewer digits — i.e., they may range from 1 to 9999.

2.4 Card Payment Setup

```
CARDTYPE [A|B|C|D|E]
```

Use this line to specify default card type. This letter will be used to set the credit card type whenever it isn’t specified in an imported record.

```
CHECKCARD n/a
```

If the CHECKCARD line is included, credit card numbers will be checked for basic numeric integrity using the ISO 2894 / ANSI 4.13 check-digit convention. Card numbers that don’t pass the test will be rejected.

2.5 Account Segmentation

The classified system requires that all ads belong to accounts. You need to tell the import program how you wish it to add accounts to contain the imported ads. The “ADD” directive does so. It’s syntax is:

```
ADD [BYNAME|BYPHONE|BYADNO|ATTHRESH]
```

The account adding options are:

BYNAME/BYPHONE

If the ad import data contains customer last name or phone number information, you may wish to use this information to create accounts under the customer name or phone number. If so, specify “BYNAME” or “BYPHONE” for the add method. If you use either of these account adding methods, any ad number information in the import file will be placed in the ad note field.

BYADNO

If the imported ads contain unique ad-reference numbers, you may wish to organize ads under accounts created using these numbers. If you specify “ADD BYADNO”, the ad number from import “@ADNO:” lines will be placed in the last name field of the accounts created by the import program. If you use this account adding method, any last name information in the import file will be placed in the ad note field.

ATTHRESH

You may not wish to create new accounts for each ad imported. If you don’t expect to do much bookkeeping or maintenance of imported ads, you might wish to just “dump” them *en masse* into one or more accounts. The “ADD ATTHRESH” (for “add at threshold”) command allows you to do so. If you do so, you should use the “THRESHOLD” command to set a limit for the number of ads that will be placed in a single account. When this limit is reached, a new account is created.

The “ADD ATTHRESH” command might be used like this:

```
NAME BBS
ADD ATTHRESH
THRESHOLD 100
```

This will cause the first 100 ads imported to be filed under the name “BBS 07/15/95-001” (if the date of import is July 15, 1995). The second 100 ads will be filed under “BBS 07/15/95-002”, the third 100 ads under “BBS 07/15/95-003”, etc.

If you’re adding accounts at threshold, any ad number or name information in the import file will be placed in the note field of individual ads.

2.6 Automatic Queuing

The import program can automatically add imported accounts, ads and card payments to classified system queues. To do so, add lines like:

```
ADQUEUE newads
CARDQUEUE newcards
ACCTQUEUE newaccts
```

to the setup file. If a queue already exists with the specified name, new information will be appended. Otherwise, a new queue will be created.

Only new account entries will be queued. If an ad or payment is added to an account that already exists in the system, no new account queue entry is created.

3 The Import File

The import program expects the import data file to have the filename “stimport.txt”. There may be any number of accounts, ads or card payments in this file. Each file must be coded with the following keywords and arguments:

Keyword	Argument
@ADNO:	Ad reference number
@NAME:	Customer last name
@FNAME:	Customer first name
@PHONE:	Customer phone number
@COMM:	Ignored
@ADR1:	Customer address line 1
@ADR2:	Customer address line 2
@ADR3:	Customer address line 3
@MEMO:	Account memo field
@REPEATS:	Total (all editions) inserts ordered
@CLASS:	Classification number

@NOTE: Ad note field
@TEXT: Beginning of ad text
;
Comment

The import program is meant to read an ASCII text file consisting of lines no longer than 80 characters. Lines may be delimited with carriage returns (ASCII 0x0D) or carriage-return/line-feed (0x0D,0x0A) pairs. With the exception of ad texts, each line must begin with one of the following codes:

Account info

@NAME: Customer last name
@FNAME: Customer first name
@PHONE: Customer phone number
@ADR1: Customer address line 1
@ADR2: Customer address line 2
@ADR3: Customer address line 3
@MEMO: Account memo field

Ad info

@START: Start date (MO/DY/YR)
@REPEATS: Total (all editions) inserts ordered
@CLASS: Classification number
@NOTE: Ad note field
@TEXT: Beginning of ad text
@ADNO: Optional ad identifier
@SELLER: Seller number
@EDITIONS: editions ordered
@CHARGE: amount to charge for ad
@NOVBOX Don't add a voice box

Card payment info

@CARDTYPE: Type of credit-card (A-E)
@CARDEXP: Card expiration date
@CARDAUTH: Authorization code
@CARDNUM: Card number
@CARDPAY: Payment amount
@CARDNOTE: Note for card detail item

Comments (ignored)

@COMM:
@REM
;

End of transaction

@END

Each line — with the special exception of the ad text must contain one of these codes and one argument setting a value for the associated field. Note that ad numbers may actually be any alphanumeric word, repeat counts may range from 1 to 255 and classification numbers may range from 1 to 9999.

If a record does *not* include an ad, it must end with a single line:

@END

The ad text *must* be the last entry in an record that contains ad info. The first line — and only the first line — of the ad text should begin with the code/key:

@TEXT:

The import program determines paragraph breaks with the following rule: any import file ad text line ending with a space, slash, hyphen or tilde (interpreted as a discretionary hyphen) will be joined to the following line (if any). A line ending with any other character is interpreted as the last line of a paragraph.

For example,

```
...
@CLASS: 45<CR-LF>
@REPEATS: 1<CR-LF>
@TEXT: SMALL 2 bdrm house in <CR-LF>
country no pets, no <CR-LF>
smoking, $500/mo plus SD.<CR-LF>
623-6324<CR-LF>
```

This ad will be interpreted as having two paragraphs: the first begins with “SMALL” and ends with “SD.”; the second is the phone number. The lines ending with “in ” and “no ” are not interpreted as separate paragraphs because each ends in a space.

3.1 Examples

Here's an example of a combined credit-card and ad transaction. Note that the ad text is the last entry:

```
@NAME: Jones
@FNAME: Stan
@PHONE: 916-753-1732
@CARDTYPE: B
@CARDNO: 5123 11232 1232 1233
@CARDEXP: 10/97
@CARDPAY: 26.50
@ADNO: 1234-24
@CHARGE: 26.50
@CLASS: 45<CR-LF>
@REPEATS: 1<CR-LF>
@TEXT: SMALL 2 bdrm house in <CR-LF>
country no pets, no <CR-LF>
smoking, $500/mo plus SD.<CR-LF>
623-6324<CR-LF>
```

This one is credit-card only:

```
@NAME: Jones
@FNAME: Stan
@PHONE: 916-753-1732
@CARDTYPE: B
@CARDNO: 5123 11232 1232 1233
@CARDEXP: 10/97
@CARDPAY: 26.50
@END
```

And, this one just establishes an account:

```
@NAME: Jones
@FNAME: Stan
@PHONE: 916-753-1732
@ADR1: 213 Catun Park Rd.
@ADR2: Orangeville, CA 98743
@MEMO: Import from BBS
@END
```

4 Running The Import Program

The ad import program will typically be used as part of a batch process that not only runs the import program but also backs up (saves copies of) old import files and sets up new import files. A sample batch routine that does all this, “AdImport.Bat”, is included with the ad import program. This batch routine will typically need editing to adapt it to the needs of your site.

As shipped, AdImport may be run with a command like:

```
AdImport newads.txt
```

Where “NewAds.Txt” is the name of the formatted ad text import file.

The batch routine checks for the existence of the import file and makes sure it can find the classified ad database. It backs up old import and rejection files, then copies NewAds.Txt into the STImport.Txt file read by the import program. Then, the actual import program, STImport.Exe, is run with command line arguments that cause it to use the current system date and “0” for a default ad seller number. The batch file then issues warnings if ads were rejected.

4.1 Import Errors

The ad import program will reject any ad record it can't understand. It writes the contents of rejected ad records into a text file, “STReject.Log”. If ads are rejected, you should use a text editor (such as UEdit.Exe) to edit the rejection log to discover why the records were rejected. If the ad records can be fixed with the text editor, you may wish to do so and then re-run AdImport, asking it to import the contents of STReject.Log.

Table of Contents

Batch Importing of Classified Data (4.2)

Introduction	1
The Setup File	2
Account Defaults	3
Ad Defaults	5
Classification Number Translation	7
Card Payment Setup	8
Account Segmentation	8
Automatic Queuing	10
The Import File	10
Examples	13
Running The Import Program	14
Import Errors	14