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Varian, Inc.
2700 Mitchell Drive
Walnut Creek, CA 94598-1675/USA

Star Chromatography Workstation

Version 6.41

Release Notes

The following information can be found in this document:

Notes on Running under Windows XP / Windows 2000 / Windows NT

For customers who plan to install the Star Workstation on a computer running Windows XP Professional, Windows 2000, or Windows NT 4.0. This includes important qualification and operational notes.

Notes on Reliable Operation

For all Star Workstation customers, important notes and safeguards to ensure the most reliable system operation.

Upgrading from Data Systems other than the Star Workstation

For customers who are upgrading from data systems that export data into the AIA format (such as Dynamax PC), notes for converting data into the Star Workstation format.

Miscellaneous Notes

Additional information for all Star Workstation customers not covered in other documents.

The following information can be found in other related documents:



Star Chromatography Workstation Upgrade Notes

For customers who are installing Version 6 on a computer where a previous version is installed. Also includes operational differences between Version 6 and previous versions not covered in other documents.



LC Control Release Notes

Information for Star Workstation customers running LC Control software. Included in these notes are important issues for customers upgrading from a previous version of the Star Workstation.



GC Control Release Notes

Information for Star Workstation customers running GC Control software.

Notes on Running under Windows XP / 2000 / NT

Star Workstation Version 6.41 has been qualified to run under Windows XP Professional, Windows2000, or Windows NT 4.0 with Service Pack 6 or later. It is recommended that you consult with your Windows System Administrator before installing the Star Workstation on your computer.

Use of a local Firewall

If a local firewall such as the one included in Windows XP SP2 is enabled on your computer, you need to configure the firewall so that you allow connections to the System Control applications from all other computers.

In the case of Windows XP SP2, a warning dialog may be displayed when System Control starts up, as shown below:



When the above dialog is displayed, simply click on the *Unblock* button and System Control will be granted permission to communicate with the Network port-based Modules. This permission will be recorded in a firewall exceptions list so that Windows will not have to ask you again.

In more complicated situations, you may need to directly access the Firewall settings from the Control Panel, and add the System Control application to the list of allowed exceptions. The System Control executable file is named CHEMIS32.EXE and it resides in the Star Workstation Installation directory, typically C:\STAR.

Hyperthreading / Multiprocessors

Hyperthreading is a feature of the Intel Pentium 4 chip, which allows it to behave as two separate processors. This feature can usually be enabled or disabled in the Computer's BIOS. The System Control application currently does not support hyperthreading or the use of multiple processors, but it will automatically set itself to run on a single processor, allowing other applications to use the multiprocessor features if desired. This limitation is due to the driver for some of the GPIB interface cards, and it will likely be removed once the manufacturer updates these drivers.

Administrator Privilege Required for Installation

Since the Star Workstation installs NT device drivers in your computer (to support the ADC Board and GPIB Board), you must be logged on with Administrator privilege in order to install the software.

Installing on Windows XP / 2000 / NT

When installing on a Windows XP / 2000 / NT machine, you might need to reboot in order for System Control to recognize ADC and GPIB ISA boards (if any are installed). A reboot is needed when you have booted Windows XP / 2000 / NT with no Star Workstation installed, since a critical piece of Workstation software, *wsstario.sys*, is loaded only at startup on Windows Windows XP / 2000 / NT systems.

Peak Table Editing in Interactive Graphics

If you are editing a Peak Table in Interactive Graphics while System Control is running, the keyboard may become unresponsive when System Control enters the *Computing* state. When System Control completes the *Computing* process, editing may resume as usual.

Notes on Reliable Operation

Automation and Printing

The Star Workstation will reliably perform thousands of live injections. To take full advantage of this capability, verify the availability of sufficient hard disk space, quantities of solvent for your HPLC pumps, gasses for your GCs and paper for your printer. Prior to performing prolonged unattended automated injection sequences, make certain that your printer has sufficient paper and an unobstructed paper feed and exit path to avoid interrupting your analyses due to printer errors. You may avoid printer related problems altogether during live injections by un-checking the *Enable Automatic Printing* option under the *Automation* menu for each instrument you are running in System Control. The *SampleList* allows you to log Data Files generated from the injections into a *RecalcList*, which can then be used to print out your results after all injections have been performed. Refer to the *Inject Single Sample* and *Inject Multiple Sample* sections of your Operation Manual for more information on setting up and using *RecalcLists*.

Concurrent Access of Methods and Data Files

Recalculating Data Files from Interactive Graphics using a method file active in System Control during automation will occasionally cause problems. It is strongly recommended that you use a different method file, or that you recalculate once the automation has completed.

If you are running automated injections and recalculations from System Control while the active Method is being modified in either Interactive Graphics or Method Builder, errors may occur that cause automation to halt. Also, if you are recalculating a Data File from System Control and the Data File is simultaneously open in the Standard Report application, errors causing automation to halt may also occur. If you are running unattended automation in System Control, make sure that neither of these conditions exists.

Problems can also possibly occur if you recalculate different channels of the same data file at the same time. It is strongly recommended that you only recalculate one channel of data at a time for a given data file.

Star Workstation and other Windows Applications

The Star Workstation is tested with a variety of other Windows applications. In routine operation you will find little trouble using the Star Workstation with other standard Windows applications such as Microsoft Excel and Word. However, if you are running valuable samples of very limited quantity, you will want to avoid opening or running other applications unless you are absolutely certain that the other applications are reliable.

Disk Fragmentation

Once the disk usage gets close to full capacity, even if space is freed performance is likely to be degraded by disk fragmentation, which means that files are stored in multiple fragments, which slows down access. This can, in some cases, cause serious performance degradation, so it is recommended to perform a disk defragmentation following file cleanup on a regular basis (e.g. once a month). Tools are included in most versions of Windows to perform and schedule the defragmentation; third party tools are available as well.

Avoid Accumulating Thousands of Files in a Directory

As the number of files in a given directory increases, the average time it will take Windows to find a given file increases. It is recommended to keep the number of files to a directory under 1000 (although much higher numbers can be managed). This is especially important in 2 areas:

Data Files: The SampleLists allow you to specify a directory to store the data files; we recommend you use this feature to save data in different directories. Creating a directory tree with a logical structure will also make it easier for you to retrieve the data.

Message Logs: Starting with Version 6, the message logs are given unique names and are saved for each new automation process, under a subdirectory of the main Star Workstation directory named MSGLOG. We recommend that you periodically archive or delete the message logs so that the number of files in the MSGLOG directory remains manageable.

Upgrading from Data Systems Other than the Star Workstation

Data files from systems that export to the AIA format can be imported into the Star Workstation. Dynamax PC supports data file export into the AIA format, so your Dynamax PC data files can be used in your Star Workstation system.

To import AIA files into the Star Workstation, you must install the Advanced Applications—an optional component available when you install the Star Workstation. After you have installed the Star Workstation and Advanced Applications, use the following procedure to convert your files.

1. Using your old data system, export the data files into the AIA (.CDF) format.
2. Copy the converted AIA files into the directory where you access your Star Workstation data files.
3. From the Varian Star Workstation program folder accessed from the Windows Start button, select Import and Export AIA Format from the Advanced Applications sub-folder.
4. Select the AIA to Varian button in the Varian ↔ AIA Conversion window.
5. Select the .CDF file to convert from the Browser window.

The file will be converted to a Star Workstation .RUN file, ready for use by the Star Workstation. This file can now be recalculated from Interactive Graphics/Data Handling. Repeat this procedure for each file to be converted.

Miscellaneous Notes

Using long File Names

The Star Workstation supports the use of long file names for Data Files, Methods, SampleLists, RecalcLists, and Sequences. Since you can specify the names for Data Files using wildcard symbols that are replaced with information such as sample name, injection date, detector name, and injection number, it is possible to accidentally specify a filename that will exceed the 255 character limit on file names in Windows. When you specify Data File names, make sure that the resulting path and file name does not exceed this limit. If this limit is exceeded, the possibility of duplicate file names and data loss exists.

AutoSamplers and SampleLists

A Star Workstation SampleList may simultaneously contain sections for several different AutoSamplers. System Control will use the section for the AutoSampler that is configured for the instrument in which the SampleList is open. The Star Workstation recognizes each supported AutoSampler and will automatically use the correct SampleList for that AutoSampler. If you have a sampling device other than an AutoSampler or if you are using an AutoSampler that System Control doesn't recognize, then System Control will use a Generic SampleList.

Standard Reports

If you right-click on a chromatogram trace in Interactive Graphics and select *View Standard Report* or *View Results Only*, the first channel containing results will be displayed. If more than one channel contains results, this may not necessarily be the same channel that you were viewing in Interactive Graphics. You can change the channel displayed in the Standard Report application using the channel selection combo-box in the toolbar.

If you are using long file names for your Data Files, you may notice that your results reports are printed in landscape mode rather than portrait mode. The Star Workstation does this automatically to allow the full text of the file name to be printed.

Printer Drivers

If you are having trouble with printing—for example, if the printed output is formatted incorrectly, or if error messages are generated during the printing process—it is possible that the printer driver you are using requires updating. Check with the printer's manufacturer for updated printer drivers. If an updated driver does not exist for your printer, then you may have to experiment with various Windows and Star Workstation settings and options to work around your problem.

If you are using an HP Paintjet printer and you have elected to set a chart speed manually rather than using the 'Fit-to-Page' option in the Chromatogram Options of the Report section of your Method, you may see an additional blank page after the chromatogram is printed. If you use the Okidata LED Pageprinter with the OLA 10 driver, the Report header will be compressed.

Specifying AutoLink Applications

If you are using AutoLink and the path or file name contains spaces, you will need to enclose the path and file name in double quotes (""). Keep in mind that the Browse feature will enter the path and file name without quotes—you will need to add them to the file specification by hand.

N% Calibration Can lead to Wrong Results

When calibrating using Normalized Percent calibration type, averaging replicates in calibration runs will produce incorrect calibration curves. You must keep the replicates separate when using Normalized Percent calibration in order to generate correct results.