AccountMate®
SOFTWARE THAT FITS

Article # 1194

Technical Note: Understanding How AccountMate Handles Special Characters in Key Fields

Difficulty Level: Beginner Level AccountMate User

Version(s) Affected: AccountMate 11 for SQL and Express
AccountMate 10 for SQL, Express, and LAN
AccountMate 9 for SQL, Express, and LAN
AccountMate 8 for LAN

Module(s) Affected: All Modules

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DESCRIPTION

Understanding the features and capabilities of the accounting software your company is using enables you to fully maximize its usage. It is also important that you are aware of its limitations. Knowing these limitations helps you plan how to more efficiently manage the accounting software. One of the most common limitations of an accounting software is handling special characters. In AccountMate, we refer to these characters as "illegal characters."

This Technical Note provides you with a list of characters that are illegal in AccountMate. It also provides examples of possible issues that you may encounter when illegal characters are used.

SOLUTION

Illegal characters

Below is a list of characters that are considered illegal in AccountMate:

- Apostrophe/single quote (')
- Quotation mark/double quotes (")
- Colon (:)
- Asterisk (*)
- Ampersand (&)
- Backward and forward slashes (\ /)
- Question mark (?)
- Less than and greater than signs (< >)
- Vertical bar (|)

Entering values containing illegal characters in the primary key fields (e.g., **Customer #**) can cause errors upon transactions recording or reports generation. The use of illegal characters may even lead to data corruption.

To avoid issues potentially caused by illegal characters, do <u>not</u> use any of them in the following fields:

- **Item #, Customer #, Vendor #**
- **Database name**
- **GL Account ID**

In addition to the characters listed above, you can further specify other characters that will <u>not</u> be allowed in the primary key fields. To do this, perform the following:

1. Launch the AccountMate Administrator program.
2. Access the **Setup** menu, and select the **System Setup** function.
3. Go to the **Miscellaneous** tab.
4. In the **Key Field Restriction** field amend the default illegal characters that you want to disallow in primary key fields. You may also enter in this field additional characters separated by a space.

Warning message

AccountMate will validate the characters a user enters in a Maintenance or Transaction function's primary key field against the list of illegal characters in the **Key Field Restriction** field. AccountMate will display a warning message each time a user enters an illegal character in a primary key field.

For example, assume that an apostrophe (') was listed in the **Key Field Restriction** field. When a user creates a customer record with an apostrophe (e.g. POP'S) in the **Customer #** field, AccountMate displays this message *(see Figure 1):*
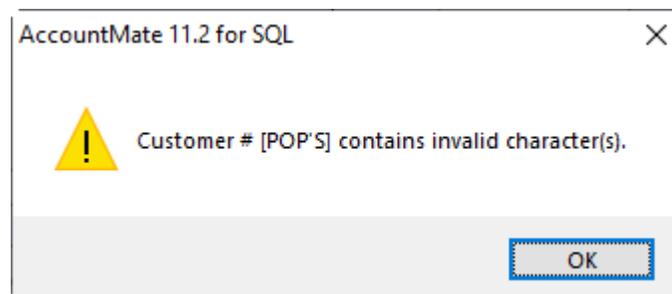

Figure 1. Key field contains illegal character(s)

This message serves as a warning, and you cannot save the record.

This feature affects only new records, and it is not retroactive. AccountMate will <u>not</u> display a warning message that the record contains invalid characters and will save the record as entered if at the time the record is created these illegal characters are not specified in the **Key Field Restriction** field. Once these illegal characters are saved in Maintenance or Transactions function, AccountMate may display errors (see the first example below) instead of a warning message.

Possible errors

The following are examples of errors that you may encounter due to usage of illegal characters:

- **ODBC Error No. 102: Incorrect syntax near 'S'.**

    This error may occur if an apostrophe/single quote (e.g. POP'S) was entered in the **Customer #** field. *(See Figure 2).*

Figure 2. ODBC Error No. 102: Incorrect syntax near 'S'

- **Error in creating database.**

    This error may occur when a space is used in the **Database Name** field. *(See Figure 3).*

Figure 3. Error in creating database

- **VFP Error No. 36: Command contains unrecognized phrase/keyword.**

  You may encounter this error when you print computer checks for a Vendor # that has apostrophe ('). This error is specific to AccountMate for LAN. *(See Figure 4).*
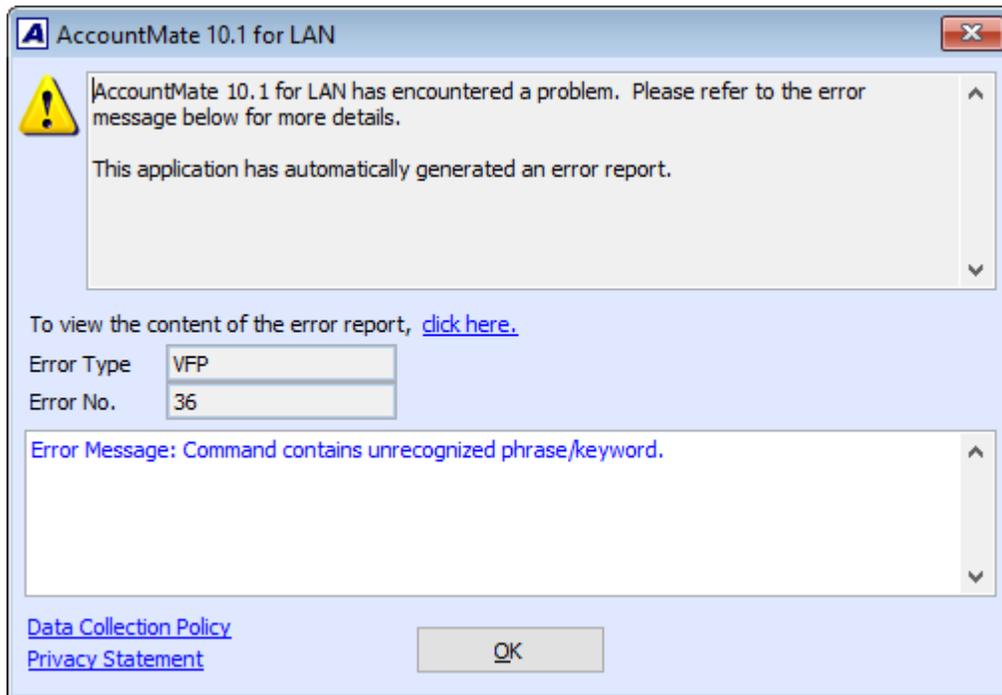

Figure 4. Command contains unrecognized phrase/keyword

The errors shown in this Technical Note illustrate a few of the issues that you may encounter when you use illegal characters. Now that you know which characters are considered illegal in AccountMate, we suggest that you verify in the AccountMate installation whether any of these characters exist in the primary key fields. Should you find any, please contact your AccountMate Solution Provider or AccountMate Technical Support for assistance. We also suggest that you keep a record of the list presented in this Technical Note and avoid using them in the primary key fields.