

Tales From Tech 2 - Issue: 28.1

Splat! Squish! Splatter! A beginner's guide to common error messages in Versions 8 and 8.5.

In Volume 6 of Tales From Tech 2, I told you about some of the most common Version 7 problems and error messages and how to fix them.

Today, I wanted to take a moment (actually, a few moments) to cover some of the most common error messages from Versions 8 and 8.5 of PowerChurch Plus.

My goal is to be brief and to the point and to give you the problem and answer in quick, simple terms. Of course, this has been my goal before and I've always failed miserably. Even though I will be trying to "get to the point" there are several points to get to and so this will be a two-parter.

Please note that if the following suggestions don't correct the problem you are having, you'll want to contact us directly to discuss the issue with a technician.

Anyway, thinking about whether there are chickens on other planets reminded me of that age-old question: ***If an apple a day keeps the doctor away, does one bad apple attract a bunch of doctors?***

Before we start, keep in mind that if you are getting an error message in the program, the first thing to do is to check your program date.

The latest program date for each version of PowerChurch Plus is listed at <http://www.powerchurch.com/mr/>. This page also explains how to check the program date. If your program date is BEFORE the date listed for your version, download and install the latest Maintenance Release because the problem might be something we've already fixed.

(By the way, please note that the exact text of an error message may vary depending upon the circumstances and so I'm going to do a fair amount of abbreviating and/or paraphrasing below.)

BUGS, ISSUES AND ERRORS, OH MY!

After making sure that you are on the latest release date for your version, the next thing to try is to simply restart PowerChurch Plus and reindex your data files. Reindexing is done through the Utilities menu and it fixes a wide range of problems, including file does not exist, index does not match table, record out of range, invalid seek offset and table has no index order set messages.

To keep things running smoothly, make sure that you are reindexing your data files at least once or twice a week.

By the way, if you get one of these messages when you are starting the program and

you are on Version 8.5, then it is actually possible to reindex even when you can't get into the program. In the directory where Version 8.5 is installed, there is a file called PCINDEX85.EXE. Just run it and your files will be magically reindexed. In fact, you can actually set up reindexing as a scheduled task in Windows so you can have the computer run the reindex automatically. You can find more information about this by going to our Web site, clicking "search" and then entering "pcindex85" in the "keyword search" section.

RESOURCE MANAGER - INTERNAL CONSISTENCY ERROR / CLASS NOT REGISTERED

These two errors are generally very easy to fix. All you have to do is close the program if it is running and then run the NETSETUP.EXE program which is in the directory where PowerChurch Plus is installed.

When you run NETSETUP.EXE, just click the next button on each screen and when it's finished, start the program and see if you still get the error.

CAN'T UPDATE THE CURSOR / ERROR INSTANTIATING CURSOR OBJECT / INVALID FILE DESCRIPTOR

These errors are caused by file or network permission issues and they each indicate a problem writing to or creating a file.

Since these issues relate to permissions, if you are on a network, the first and most obvious thing to check is the permissions on the folder the program is installed in. In order to run the software across your network, the folder must be shared with full read and write permissions for all users.

If the permissions are right or if you aren't on a network, the next thing to check is the actual file attributes. There are no files in the program directory or any sub-directories that should be set to read-only.

Finally (not for the issue, just for this section, so take back that sigh of relief), if you are on a Windows XP machine and there are no files set to read-only, make sure that you are logged in under XP as a computer administrator and not a limited user. This shouldn't be an issue if you are on a network, just if you are on a stand alone XP machine.

NOT A TABLE

Many of you were probably thinking that the bad news was in the last paragraph when I said we weren't finished, but the real bad news in this tale is "not a table."

Versions ago (think Version 6.2 and prior), this error could generally be corrected fairly easily, but unfortunately, getting this error in Version 7 or above is bad news.

Basically, the message indicates that one of the data files doesn't appear to be a data file. In other words, a data file has been damaged or corrupted to such an extent that it cannot even be recognized as a data file.

Probably the best hope you have is if there's a recent backup tucked away somewhere. If there is, try restoring it. Before you do, you might make a backup of your current

data to a different disk or set of disks, just in case you have problems restoring. Just keep your fingers crossed that the backup was made before the file was damaged. (Of course, if you cross your fingers, it could make typing more difficult, so remember to uncross them at some point.)

If you do not have a recent backup, the next thing would probably be to call us directly. If you do, we'll more than likely tell you to send in your data and there's a pretty good chance that there may be data lost. Rarely, we can recreate some information from other files, but this is not always the case.

The moral of this story is to make frequent backups.

BAD CRC

The final error I'm going to mention today occurs when trying to restore a backup that has been damaged or corrupted.

When you make a backup in PowerChurch Plus, the program compresses the files and creates one file containing all the separate data files. If you are using a high capacity disk or a CD-R/RW, this compressed (or zipped) file is written in its entirety to the media (as long as there is room). If you are backing up to diskettes, the file is divided across disks if it's too big to fit on one floppy.

If a problem occurs when the file is being written to the disk or the disk itself is damaged, the backup file could be corrupted and the program might not be able to restore from it.

If you were trying to restore data from another computer and you can make another backup or if you happen to have another backup that you can try restoring, give that a shot. As long as there isn't a problem with the second backup, you should be fine. The chances of having two bad backups in a row are pretty slim, but if you do see this error happening frequently, it could indicate a problem with the drive the backup was made on and you'll probably want to get your computer support staff or a technician to look at it.

If you don't have and can't get another backup of the same data, it might be possible for us to help extract the information from the damaged file, but call us first so we can discuss the options in more detail. It is possible that you will lose data. Sometimes (but certainly not all the time) the problem only affects an index file and this is generally pretty easy for us to fix.

The moral of this story is to make more than one backup when it's important.

THE END (ALMOST)

Well, I guess that's it for today's volume. I don't want to overwhelm you, so I'll finish up this sordid tale in the next volume of Tales From Tech 2.

BROUGHT TO YOU TODAY BYâ€¦

Today's newsletter was brought to you by the letters C, H, E, C, K, R, E, A, D, E, R and the numbers 2, 8, 0, 0 and 0.

If you are using PowerChurch Plus Version 8.5 or higher, it is possible to use a check reader to speed up contribution entry. As luck would have it, we actually have these wonderful little hardware miracles available for purchase. There are details on the check reader and how it works on our Web site at <http://www.powerchurch.com/hardware/>.

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