

NAIC Stock Prospector Tips & Tricks

Read the Manual

Brian Lewis wrote in BITS (Feb 2003 Screening for Stocks with the New Prospector) the following on paper manuals. I have made minor timely corrections.

"Sounds kind of obvious, right? Read or at least skim through the manual. There are actually two documents (in Adobe Acrobat PDF format) placed in your c:\program files\prospector directory when you install Prospector. Start with the 12-page Quick Start Guide; a printed copy comes with the CD, but if you start with the demo version of Prospector you might want to print out these 12 pages and work through them until you understand (to that level) what the product has to offer."

"Then at least take a quick look at the full user guide -- this is a 74-page manual. Yes, I know we all preferred the old days when software products gave us real paper manuals. Those days are vanishing, however. Just as with shrinking airline seat spacing, we customers vote with our pocket books, and it seems that we generally buy cheaper products when given the opportunity. I'm not defending the practice, just pointing out that you do get a manual with Prospector, if only in an electronic format. And remember, the product now only costs \$59, whereas the less functional predecessor was \$95. With the \$46 you save, you can take the PDF file to Kinko's and have them print you out a 74-page manual if you like."

"Personally, I never print out long software manuals. What I might do is put a shortcut icon for the manual onto my desktop (search your Windows Help system for information on how to do this). Then if I want to know something, I've got the usual Help system interface (via the question mark icon in Prospector), but I can also quickly load up the manual. The manual and Help system seem to contain the same information for this product, organized the same way. I prefer to read it using Adobe Acrobat, however, so it's all continuous, and not chopped up in the pieces that the Help system puts it in. Other times I find that the Help system groupings make it easier to find things."

"The Help system does have the advantage of allowing you to search. Something that a lot of people seem unaware of, however, is that you can search for text within an Acrobat file; just click on the little binoculars icon near the top, and do your search. Then if there are a few pages I find myself referencing over and over, I'll print out just those pages."

I missed the paper manual but then found that I could lookup my subject of interest quicker with the soft copy.

Try this with any PDF file.

1. Either:
 - a. Click on the binocular icon, or
 - b. File>Search, or
 - c. <CTRL F>.
2. Type in the word or phrase you would like to search for.

Remember that **when all else fails, read the manual** (paper or ~~plastic~~ CD).