



## MacroExpress Improves Speed and Accuracy

REPETITIVE TASKS CAN BE AUTOMATED, AND THEY SHOULD BE, TO SAVE TIME AND INCREASE ACCURACY. INSIGHT SOFTWARE HAS FOUR SOLUTIONS.

Anyone who needs to type identical messages frequently or repeatedly perform the same task on a computer is a candidate for an application such as MacroExpress Pro. I use "like" because the application's developer has three other options to fit specific needs.

MacroExpress Pro has been on every computer I've used since sometime in the late 1990s. I can't imagine operating a computer without it.

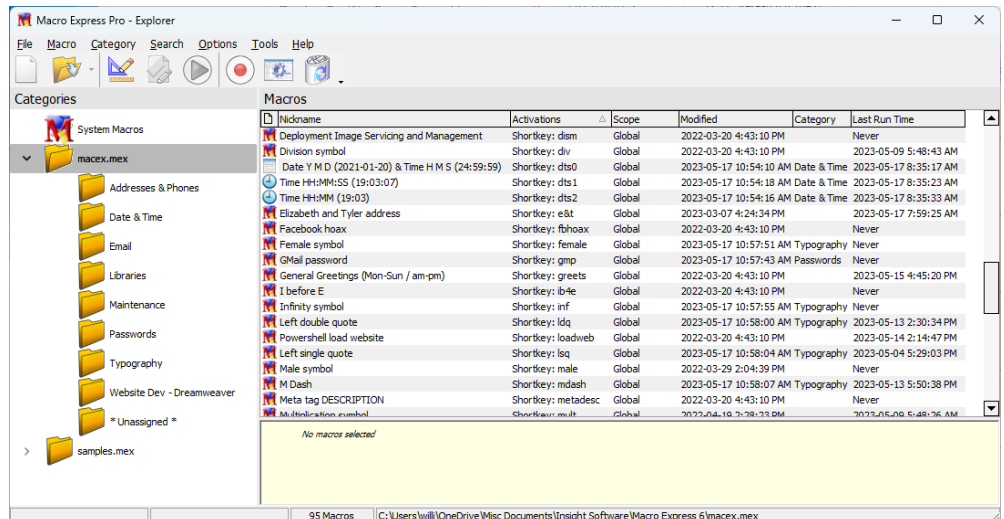
The most basic function MacroExpress provides is the ability to replace one set of keystrokes with another. All of Insight Software's applications do that, starting with ShortKeys. Keyboard Express adds capabilities, followed by MacroExpress and MacroExpress Pro. Prices range from \$40 to \$80.

### Basic to Complex

SHORTKEYS IS LIMITED TO THE MOST BASIC FUNCTIONS, REPLACING ONE SET OF KEYSTROKES WITH ANOTHER.

I name some files using a timestamp that indicates when the file was created. The timestamp I prefer uses four digits for the year, two digits each for the month and day, then two digits each for the hour, minute, and second. Example: 20230601-132830 for 1 June 2023 at 13:28:30.

Although it would be easy to type the numbers, doing so would allow me to introduce a typo, making the year 2022 instead of 2023, for example. Or I might forget that the timestamp format



**MACROEXPRESS PRO, INSIGHT SOFTWARE'S PREMIERE APPLICATION, INCLUDES FEATURES WELL BEYOND BASIC TEXT REPLACEMENT.**

has no punctuation in the date or the time, only a hyphen between them. Instead, I type two periods followed by `ats0` and MacroExpress does the rest. The two periods tell MacroExpress Pro that the next characters will be "shortkeys" that have special meaning.

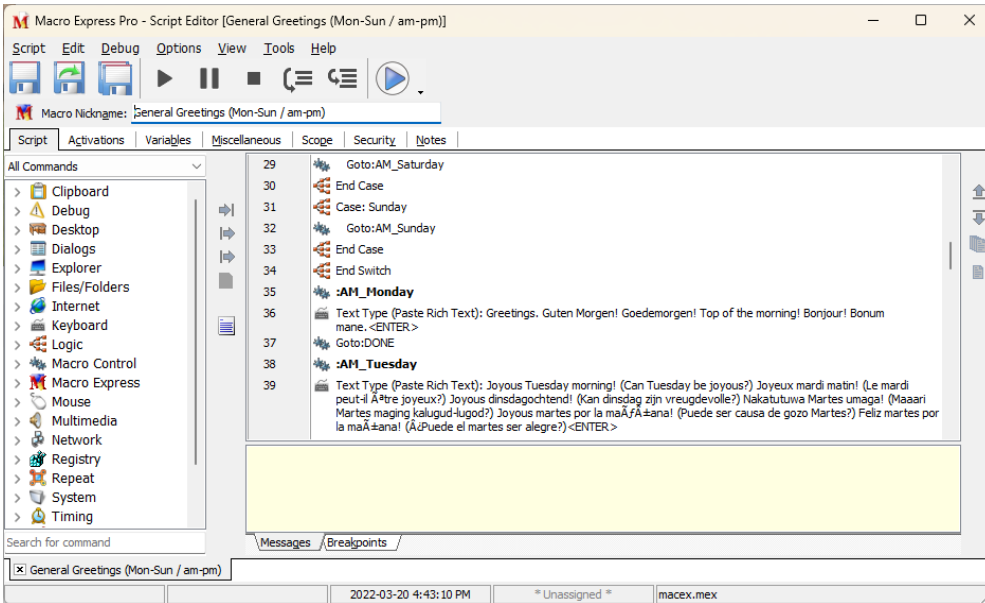
I have three timestamp macros, `dts0` though `dts2`. The letters remind me that the macros are **d**ate **t**imestamps (`dts`): in addition to `ats0` (20230601-132830), `ats1` (13:28:30), and `ats2` (13:28). Something this simple is not worth \$80 or even \$40 for ShortKeys.

In preparing HTML code, I often need `<br class="clearboth">` and I've created a macro to insert it whenever I type two periods followed by `break`.

When I need the degree symbol (81°), I can never remember the code to produce it. The same is true for copyright and trademark symbols (©, ™, and ®), addresses, and phone numbers. Macros solve the problem.

When I use an application called Agent Ransack to search all data drives for a file, I don't have to manually type `D:\;E:\;F:\;G:\;H:\;I:\`. Instead, it's two dots followed by `alldrives`. Typing the drive letters and the punctuation isn't hard, but `alldrives` is faster and less tedious.

If your business requires typing descriptive information regularly, you might have some of the blurbs stored in a word processor file so that you can find the text, copy it, and then paste it into an email. But wouldn't it be easier to type `..product5` to insert one or more paragraphs about a product?



That would probably be worth at least \$40 for ShortKeys, which could handle all of those tasks with ease. I chose MacroExpress Pro years ago because it offered more complex abilities that I needed then and need occasionally even now.

## More Complex Functions

MACROEXPRESS ADDS POWERFUL CAPABILITIES AND MACROEXPRESS PRO GOES EVEN FURTHER.

Those complex abilities might involve opening a web browser, typing a URL, waiting for specific text to appear on the screen, typing words into a form on the website, reading and copying a response from the website, opening a document on the computer, and pasting the text there.

MacroExpress Pro can also send email, be programmed to edit the Registry, display a dialog box and receive a response from the user, perform an action based on the user's response, and a lot more.

**ShortKeys** is primarily a text replacement tool. Those who have the need to type repetitive information will benefit from installing it.

**Keyboard Express** adds the ability to watch what the user does and record the actions as a macro, the ability to schedule a macro for playback, and basic program control logic such as looping structures.

**THE MACRO ASSEMBLER VIEW LISTS CLASSES OF AVAILABLE FUNCTIONS. WHEN THE USER OPENS ONE OF THE CATEGORIES, SPECIFIC OPTIONS ARE DISPLAYED. THESE CAN THEN BE ADDED TO THE SCRIPT THAT'S IN THE LARGER COLUMN. MANY OF THE FUNCTIONS CAN HAVE VARIABLES ATTACHED AND LOGIC FUNCTIONS ALLOW COMPLEX BRANCHING.**

**MacroExpress** adds many more programming tools, such as variables, string manipulation, error handling, password protection, the ability to create macros that call other macros, and links directly to the Windows interface. The current version of MacroExpress Pro is 6, so MacroExpress is the previous version, 5.

**MacroExpress Pro** includes tools for macro developers; functions that can respond to system events, access the Windows clipboard, and run multiple macros concurrently; and additional Boolean and date/time variables.


Maybe you're wondering what the point is of the two periods. This is something that the user chooses. By default, MacroExpress uses two backslashes (\\), but I prefer two periods. This is what tells the application that it needs to launch a macro based on the following keystrokes (shortkeys).

Defining shortcuts is just one way to launch a macro. The macro can be associated with a keystroke such as Ctrl-A or Win-Alt-W. I generally avoid these because so many applications use these keystrokes internally or Windows uses them. Ctrl-A, for example, means "select all" in many instances.

Macros can also be set to run on a schedule, when an application's title matches specific text, and on a variety of other conditions.

MacroExpress can record keystrokes and mouse movements, you can use a macro assembler to pick actions from a list, and you can write or edit macro scripts in a text editor after learning the language.

New users will appreciate the ability to record actions, but power users will master creating macros in the assembler or by using the script editor to view and manipulate the underlying code.

If you don't need all the features of MacroExpress Pro, some of the lower-cost options may suffice. Compare the features and prices on the [Insight Software website](#). 

**BEING ABLE TO VIEW AND EDIT THE UNDERLYING CODE THAT RUNS THE MACRO IS A PLUS FOR POWER USERS WHO CAN USE THIS VIEW TO IDENTIFY AND CORRECT CODING ERRORS. IT'S EASY TO SWITCH BETWEEN THE MACRO ASSEMBLER MODE AND THE CODE VIEW DURING THE DEVELOPMENT AND DEBUGGING PROCESS.**

