!Observe

When Data Runs, We Catch It

Dear Customer,

Thank you for choosing the Psychsoft !Observe data collection software. I am sure that you will be pleased with your purchase and will find this software an important and useful tool.

The !Observe was developed by people that observe behavior professionally every day. We understand the unique needs of this demanding task and the !Observe has been extensively tested in the field. In the process of field-testing we have found new and exciting ways to use this software and are sure that you, the user, will find many more. We invite you to share your new methodology on our web page at www.psycsoft.com.

Again, thank you for purchasing this product. If you have any questions or comments, please contact us through the web page or at 1-800-536-4996.

Thank you,

Dr. Sander Martin
President
Psychsoft Inc.

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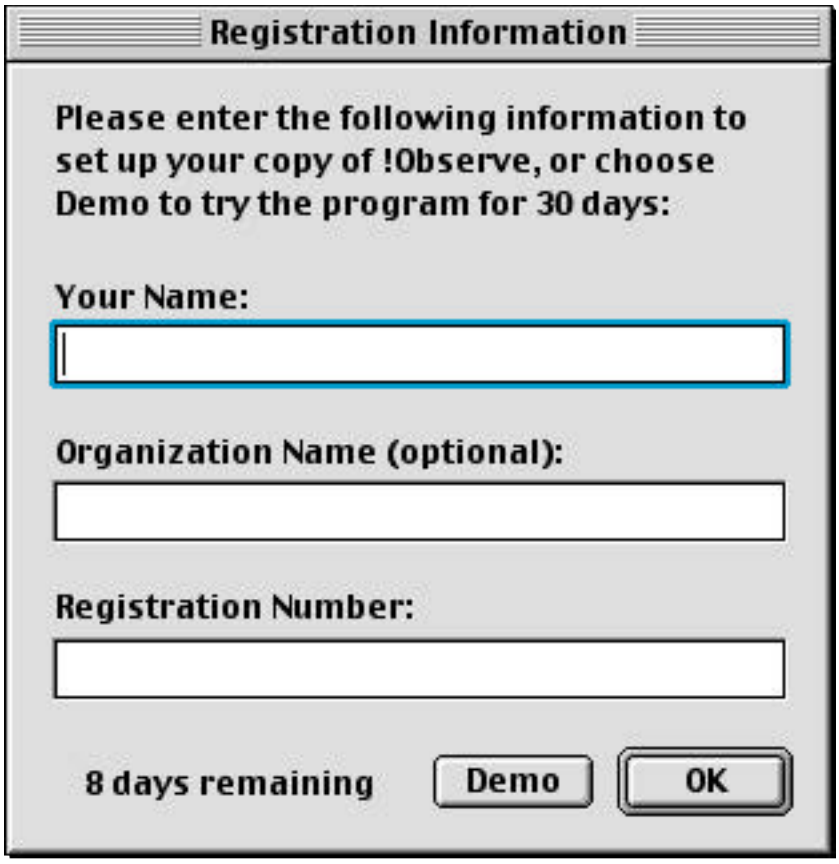
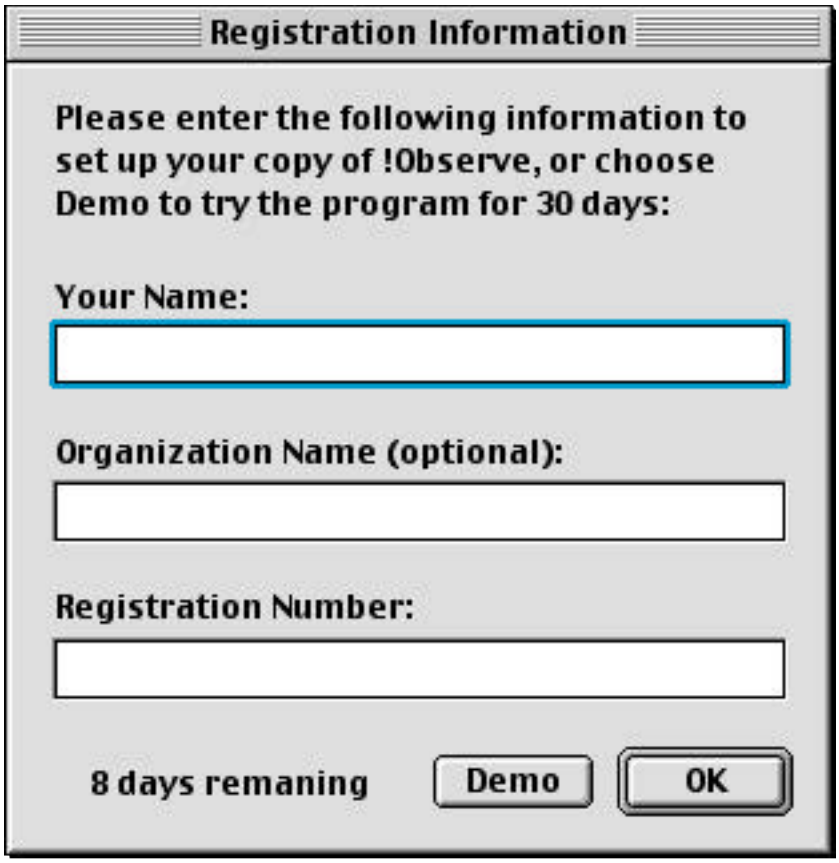
1 Installation

To install !Observe for the Macintosh, first insert the !Observe disk. When the **!Observe for Macintosh** disk icon appears, drag it on top of your hard drive icon. All of the files on the disk will be copied to your hard disk into **an !Observe for Macintosh** folder.

1.1 Registering your Software

When you launch !Observe for the first time, you will have the opportunity to register your software. If you choose not to register at this time, you will still be able to use the program for up to 30 days for evaluation purposes.

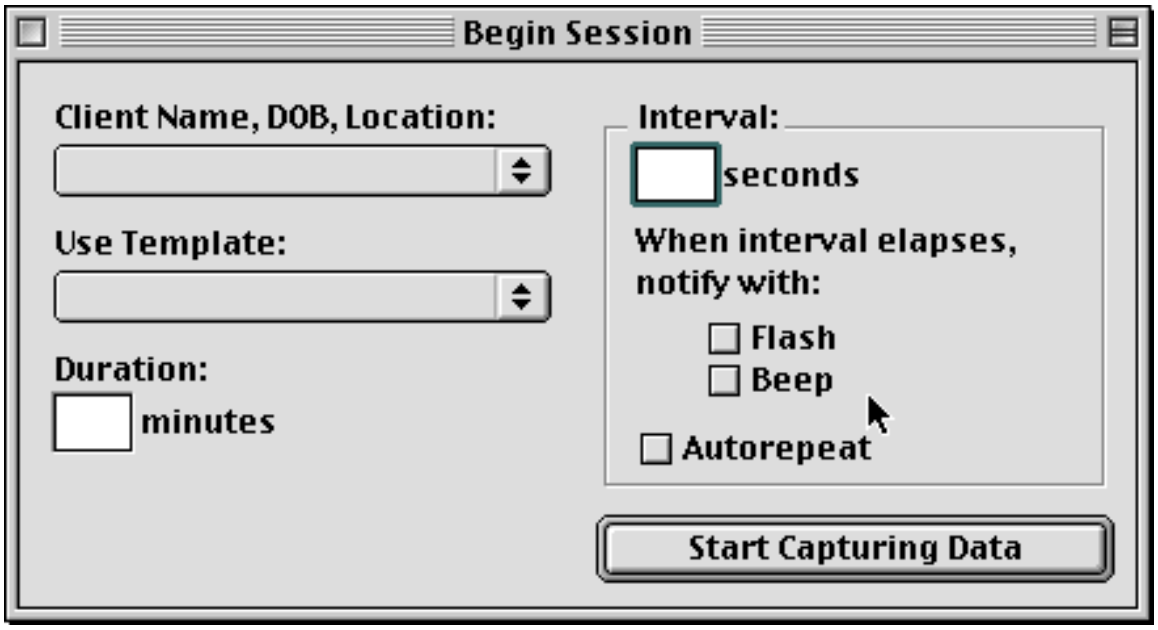




Simply enter your name, your organization name, and the registration number printed on the card that came with your software. You will only have to do this the first time you run your software.

2 The Begin Session Screen

When you launch and register the program, you will see the **About !Observe** window, which you can dismiss either by clicking in it or pressing a key. Typically the first thing you'll want to do is to open the **Begin Session** window, either by pressing **Command-B** or by selecting it from the **Actions** menu. Take a minute to explore. This is the operations screen. From this screen, you configure !Observe to record your observations. It should look something like this.



2.1 Client Name, DOB, Location

The client information menu is for you to name who or what you are observing. Typically, this menu is set to the name of the individual you are observing. You may put up to 31 characters in this box. Typically, client name, location and demographic information can be entered in the space available. If you wish to create a new entry in this menu, you can do so by selecting **New Client**.

Once you add an entry to this menu, it is saved automatically. The !Observe software will retain the information until you decide to delete it. This is done in the **View/Edit Data** window (Chapter 5) or in the Finder by dragging a client folder to the Trash. If you wish to look through and select a client name that you have already entered into the !Observe software, just select that client's name from this menu.

2.2 Event, and Interval Recording

The !Observe software has been designed with Event, or Interval observations in mind. In Event recording, specific behaviors of interest are recorded whenever they occur during the observation session. In interval observation, you observe your subject at predetermined instants (e.g. every five seconds) and record what your subject is doing at that instant.
The interval cue serves as a reminder to enter your observation, helps to standardize your observation allowing other functional assessment specialists to better understand the format of your data collection procedures. It is felt that interval observation is an excellent way to get a realistic “snapshot” of the subject’s behavior patterns. The interval setting on the Operations screen allows you to set intervals in any whole-second increment. You may simply type in the interval you wish.

2.3 Countdown

The countdown area is simply the duration of your observation. Again, you may enter the number of minutes you wish to observe (whole minutes only please).

2.4 Flash and/or Beep

Flash and Beep are methods for the user to be aware of passing intervals. If you select Flash (it should have a check mark next to the word), the background behind the headings of the capture window will change color every time an interval passes. If you choose Beep, the system beep will sound when an interval passes. If you so choose, you may have both or neither the flash nor the beep on.

2.5 Autorepeat

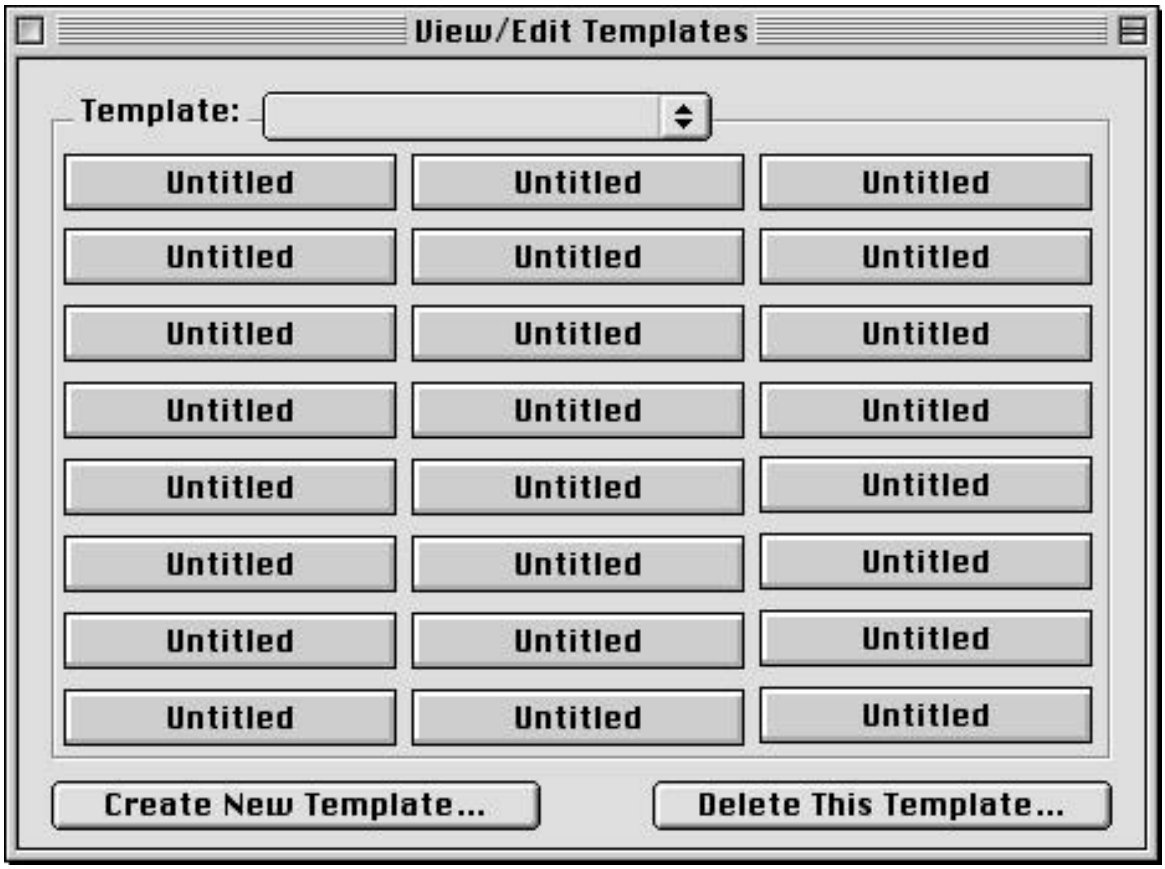
Autorepeat is a powerful feature of the !Observe software. When you select this feature and are taking data, the last behavior you observed will automatically be repeated at the next interval. You can change this simply by pressing a different behavior button. This feature is most often used when data is being taken either/or types of behavior. For example, this feature would be useful if taking data on an on task / off task observation.

2.6 Stopwatch

By using the Autorepeat feature and a one second interval setting, you can turn your computer into a stopwatch that automatically records behavior duration precisely.

3 Templates

Templates are a very important part of the !Observe software, and can be viewed and edited from the **View/Edit Templates** window, accessible from the **Actions** menu or by pressing **Command-T**. They are the engines that run the observation. Considering the import of the subject, and possible negative ramifications of not fully understanding the templates used on the !Observe, a bit of an explanation is in order.



!Observe Templates are groups of pre-made behavior buttons (behavior buttons are the icons on the right side of the operations screen). A template usually consists of a group of behaviors that the observer expects to see during an observation.

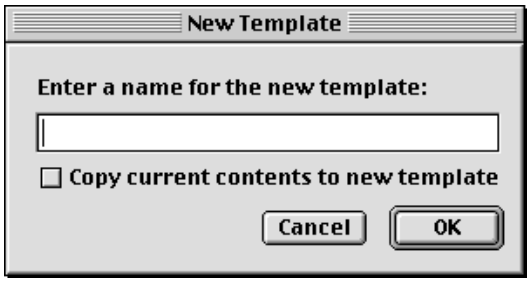
!Observe templates are very easy to produce. Because of that ease, many users have fallen into the habit of producing a template for each individual they observe. Other users develop a set of templates typical of the type of individual

they observe and use that set. It is important to note that templates are flexible, disposable and changeable.

A pre-made set of templates comes with your !Observe software. To see an Index of the templates and the associated behavior buttons, look to chapter 8 in this manual.

3.1 Creating a new template

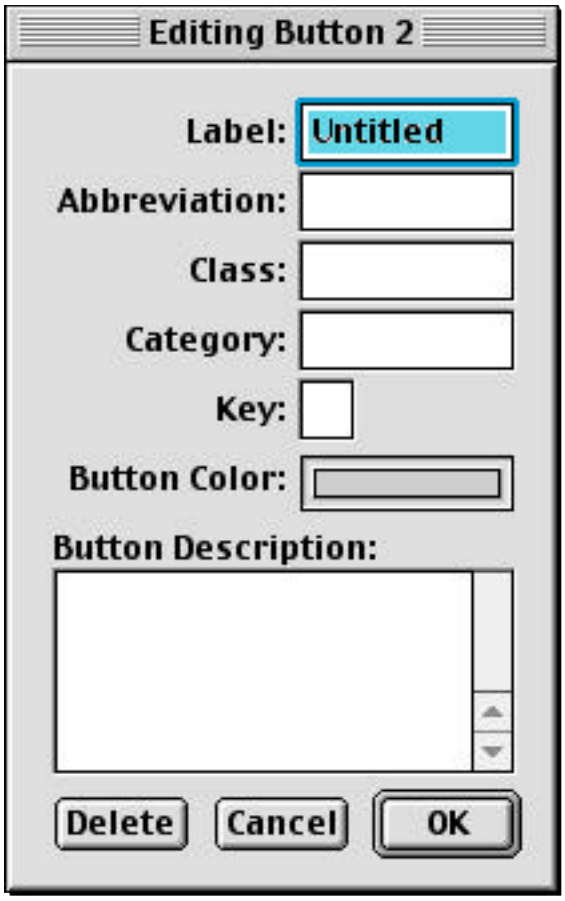
To create a new template, open the Template window (Command-T) and press the **Create New Template** button at the bottom of the screen. A dialog will appear to allow you to name your template:



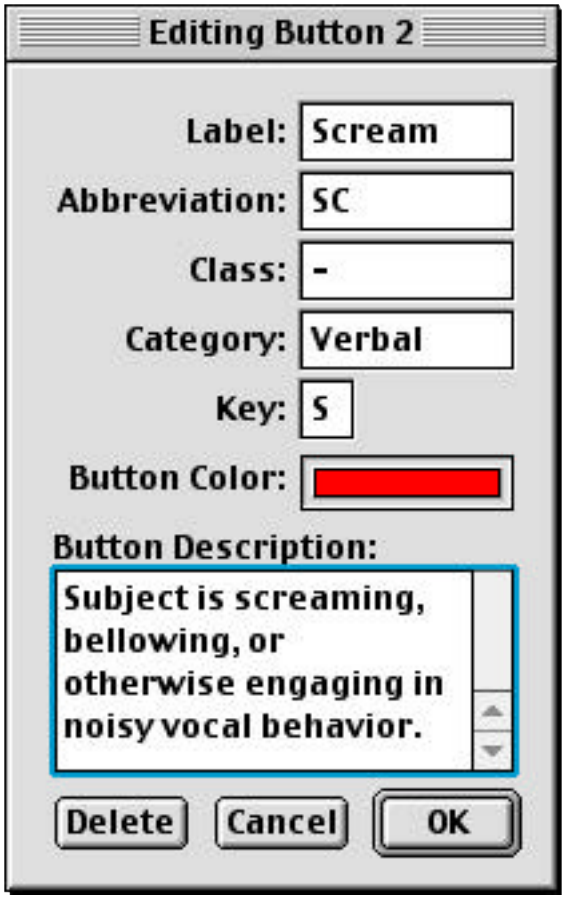
Simply input the name you desire and click OK. (31 Characters Maximum.) If you want to copy the buttons of the current template into the new one you're creating, click the **Copy Current Contents to New Template** checkbox. If you'd prefer to start from scratch, leave it unchecked.

3.2 Behavior Buttons

After you name your new template, you will have a screen full of buttons. You can edit the buttons simply by clicking on them. When you do so, this window appears:

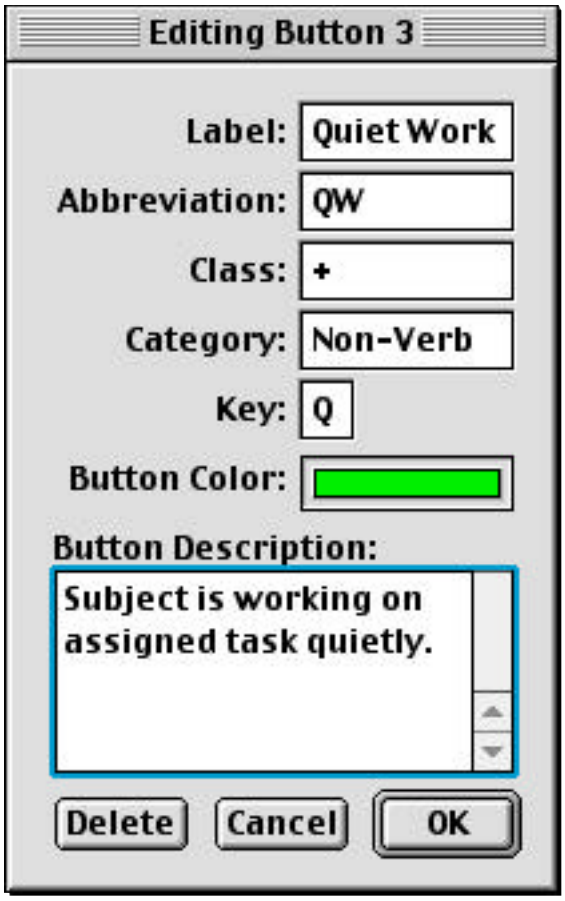

Editing Button 2
Label:
Untitled
Abbreviation:
Class:
Category:
Key:
Button Color:
Button Description:
Delete
Cancel
OK

Editing the behavior buttons is as simple as entering the data you want in the necessary box. You must put something in the label box. Whatever you type in this box will appear on the behavior button for this template. The other boxes are optional. The abbreviation will be used if you wish to look at the “stream of behavior” or the sequence of behaviors. Class and category are simply different ways of differentiating behaviors. If you needed to have “screaming” as one of the behaviors for your observation, you may want to fill in the button box like this:


Editing Button 2
Label:
Scream
Abbreviation:
SC
Class:
-
Category:
Verbal
Key:
S
Button Color:
Button Description:
Subject is screaming, bellowing, or otherwise engaging in noisy vocal behavior.
Delete
Cancel
OK

The label is obvious. The Abbreviation is whatever you wish. However, most users feel shorter is better. **Important Note: The abbreviations you enter here will appear both in the Data Capture Window and in any graphs you produce with !Observe, so choose them well!** In this case, screaming is classified as a negative behavior (This is not a Drill Instructor) and it most certainly is verbal. They key field is optional, and allows you to define a button on the keyboard to record this behavior. The button color is simply an option you can use to help organize your templates visually. You can choose a color for the button by holding the mouse button down on the Button Color swatch and making a selection from the color palette that appears. Finally, the Button Description is simply a reminder as to what this button you've so carefully designed is for. This description will be available via balloon help when you actually begin capturing behavior data.

Another button in the same template may be "quiet work" which would look like this:

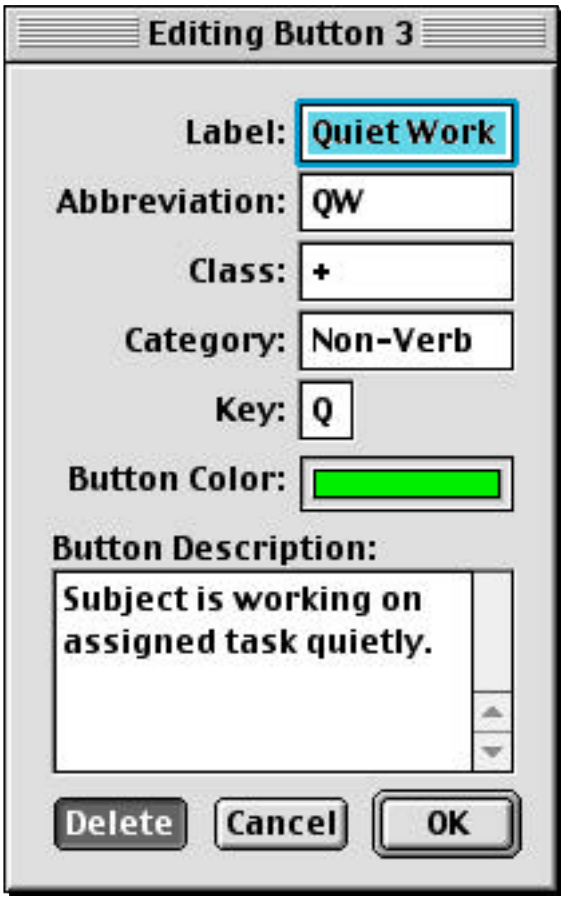

Editing Button 3
Label:
Quiet Work
Abbreviation:
QW
Class:
+
Category:
Non-Verb
Key:
Q
Button Color:
Button Description:
Subject is working on assigned task quietly.
Delete
Cancel
OK

Of course, these are just suggestions. One of the nicest features of the !Observe software is its flexibility. Each of the text boxes can be filled with whatever information you want so you may classify and collate your data whatever way you want.

3.3 Template editing

Templates are automatically saved whenever the template window is closed or you change the current template. They are retained until you delete them, either by using the **Delete This Template** button or by throwing the template file into the Trash.

You may add behavior buttons to pre-existing templates at any time. All that you need to do is click an empty behavior button and edit it to include the information you wish. After you do so, the button will be retained on the template.



To delete a button from a pre-existing template simply click on the button and select the delete button from the **Editing Button** window:

The button and all of the information about the button will be deleted from the template as soon as you click "OK". The button will be relabeled "Untitled" to let you know that it has been deleted. (Any buttons labeled "Untitled" will not be shown when you do a data capture session.)

To add or delete a button on a pre-existing template all one needs to do is to click the button that needs to be modified, and edit it. The button will be retained in its modified form on the template. There is no need to resave or rename the template.

Finally, if you don't have need of a template again, it is recommended that you delete the template to "clean" the program and your computer of unnecessary information.

4 Taking data

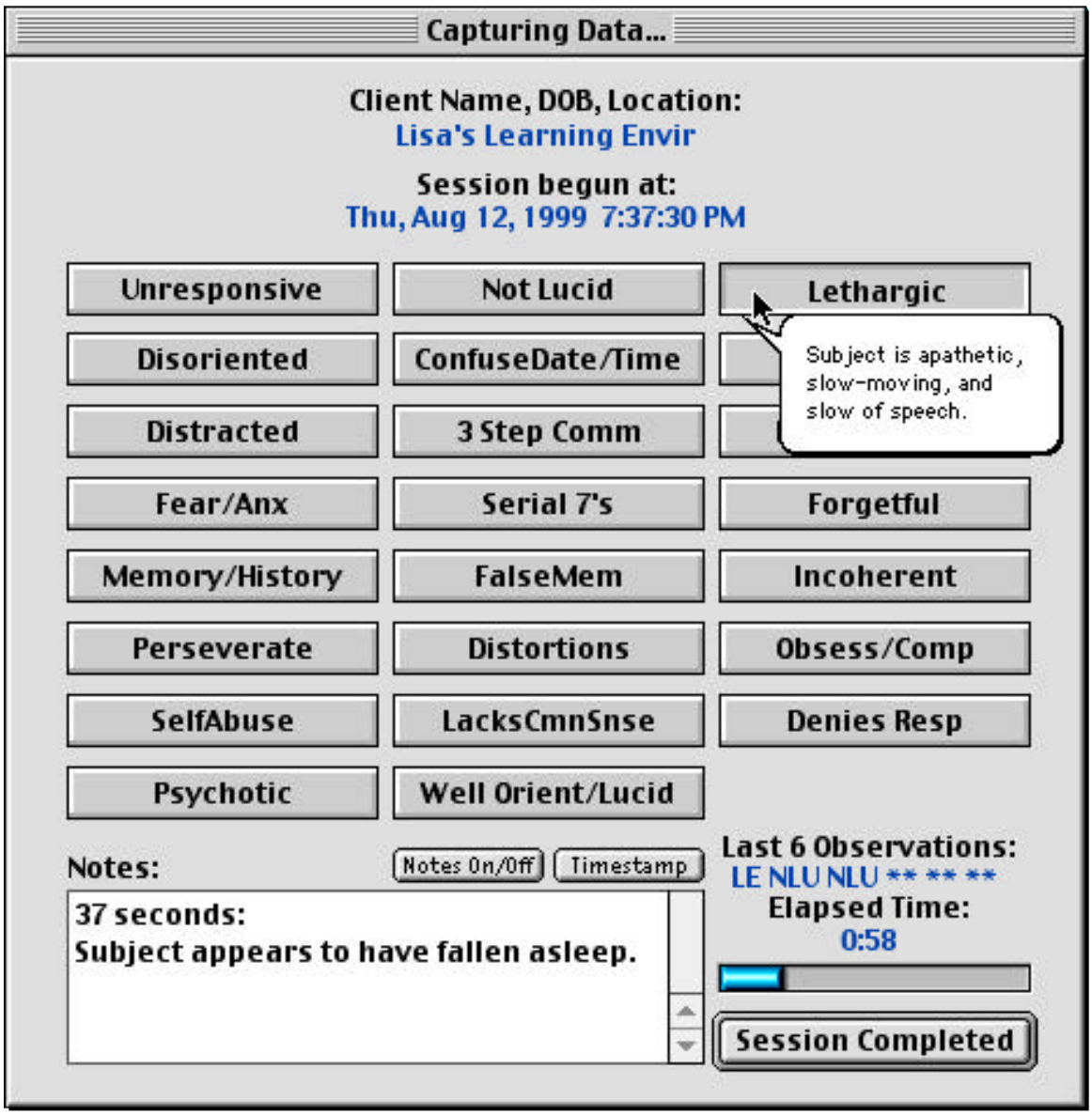
The easiest task with your !Observe software is taking data during an observation. Once you have selected a template, an interval time, the duration of the observation and added the client name all one needs to do is click the **Start Capturing Data** button on the **Begin Session** screen. The **Capturing Data** window will immediately appear, initialized with the information you've specified for this client and with the observation buttons. To actually start your session, simply click the **Start Session** button.

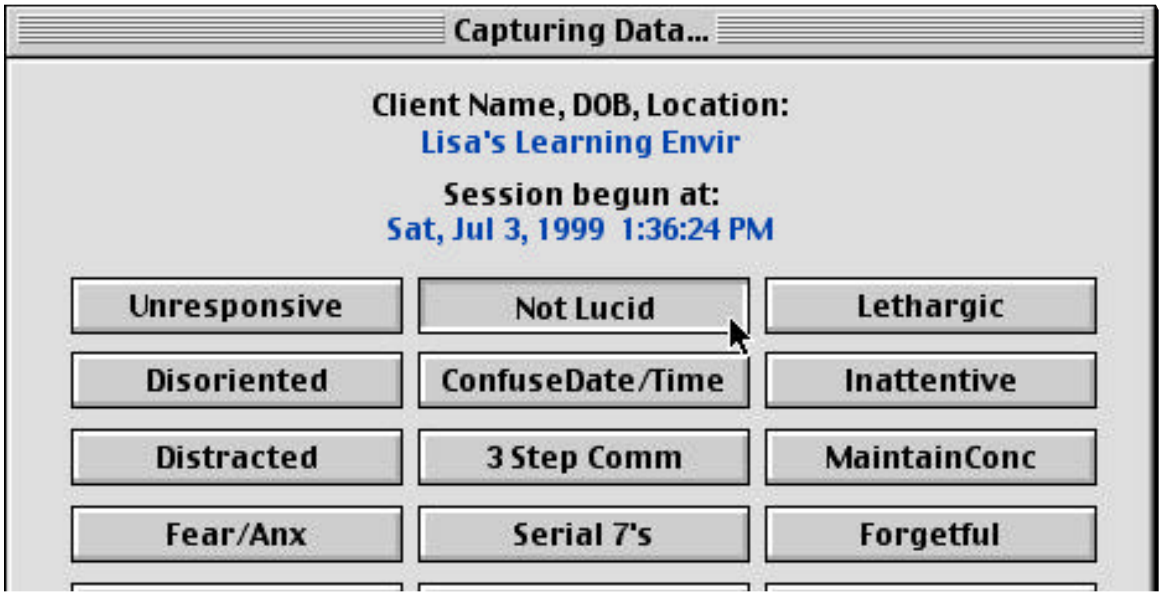
When you computer beeps or flashes at you (or whenever else you like), look at you subject and record what they are doing by pressing a behavior button or pressing the corresponding key on the keyboard. You should do this until the countdown clock reaches zero and the program immediately reverts back to the operations screen.

4.1 Making Notes During the Observation

You can also type into the notes field any other explanatory notes or reminders you may find helpful. The field is activated with the Notes On/Off button or the Timestamp button. The latter will not only activate the field, but will also insert a line indicating how long into the observation you were when you activated the field.

While taking an observation, your screen may look something like this:

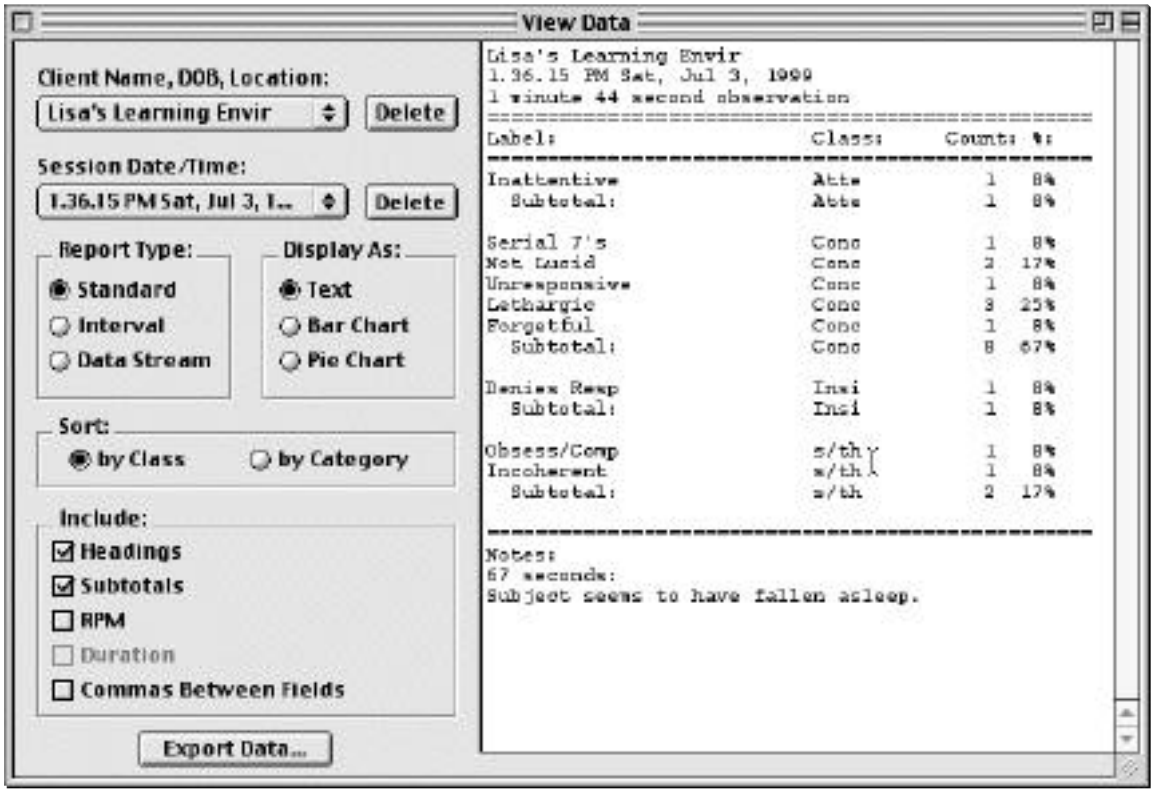

Capturing Data...
Client Name, DOB, Location:
Lisa's Learning Envir
Session begun at:
Thu, Aug 12, 1999 7:37:30 PM
Unresponsive
Not Lucid
Lethargic
Disoriented
ConfuseDate/Time
Distracted
3 Step Comm
Subject is apathetic, slow-moving, and slow of speech.
Fear/Anx
Serial 7's
Forgetful
Memory/History
FalseMem
Incoherent
Perseverate
Distortions
Obsess/Comp
SelfAbuse
LacksCmnSnse
Denies Resp
Psychotic
Well Orient/Lucid
Notes:
Notes On/Off
Timestamp
37 seconds:
Subject appears to have fallen asleep.
Last 6 Observations:
LE NLU NLU ** ** **
Elapsed Time:
0:58
Session Completed


Capturing Data...
Client Name, DOB, Location:
Lisa's Learning Envir
Session begun at:
Sat, Jul 3, 1999 1:36:24 PM
Unresponsive
Not Lucid
Lethargic
Disoriented
ConfuseDate/Time
Inattentive
Distracted
3 Step Comm
MaintainConc
Fear/Anx
Serial 7's
Forgetful

Note the progress bar right above the **Session Completed** button. This tells you how much time is left in the observation. (If you've not specified a duration, it will show a "barber pole" pattern.) Immediately above the Elapsed Time is the "behavior ticker". This gives a running list of the behavior codes during the observation. This feature has been included to allow the observer for a "feel" of what is occurring with the data during the observation. Also the background of the headings at the top of the window will flash if the **Flash** option has been selected. **4.2** Additionally, if you've entered descriptions for the buttons, you can choose **Show Balloons** from the **Help** menu and point at the buttons to cause those descriptions to appear.

5 The View Data Window

After you have taken your data, you probably will want to look at the results. The **View Data** window will open automatically when your observation session is complete. (You can also open it using the **Actions** menu or by pressing **Command-D**.) Below is an example of what you will see in the **View Data** window:



5.1 The Summary display screen

Whenever you summarize information using the !Observe software you will want to look to the Summary display screen to see the results of the observation. There are a number of pieces of information available on this screen, depending on what options you have selected.

First, you will see the behaviors listed under the **Label** heading. The behaviors are ordered first according to the sorting criteria you've selected, and second by the time when they first occurred. The count is the number of times each button was pushed.

Class is whatever you put in the class box on the Edit button screen. If you put nothing in the Class box while editing the behavior buttons for this template nothing will appear in this column.

The percentage is based upon the number of times the behavior button was pushed in relation to all of the other behavior buttons that were pushed during that session. It does not necessary reflect the exact amount of time that the behavior occurred during the observation. For more information concerning this, please see Standard vs. Interval in chapter 6.1 of this manual.

Finally, any notes you took in the Notes Field during the course of your observations will be displayed at the bottom of the window.

6 Options

You have several options available for modifying how the data you've captured is displayed.

This panel provides you with options in the way your summary screen will look.

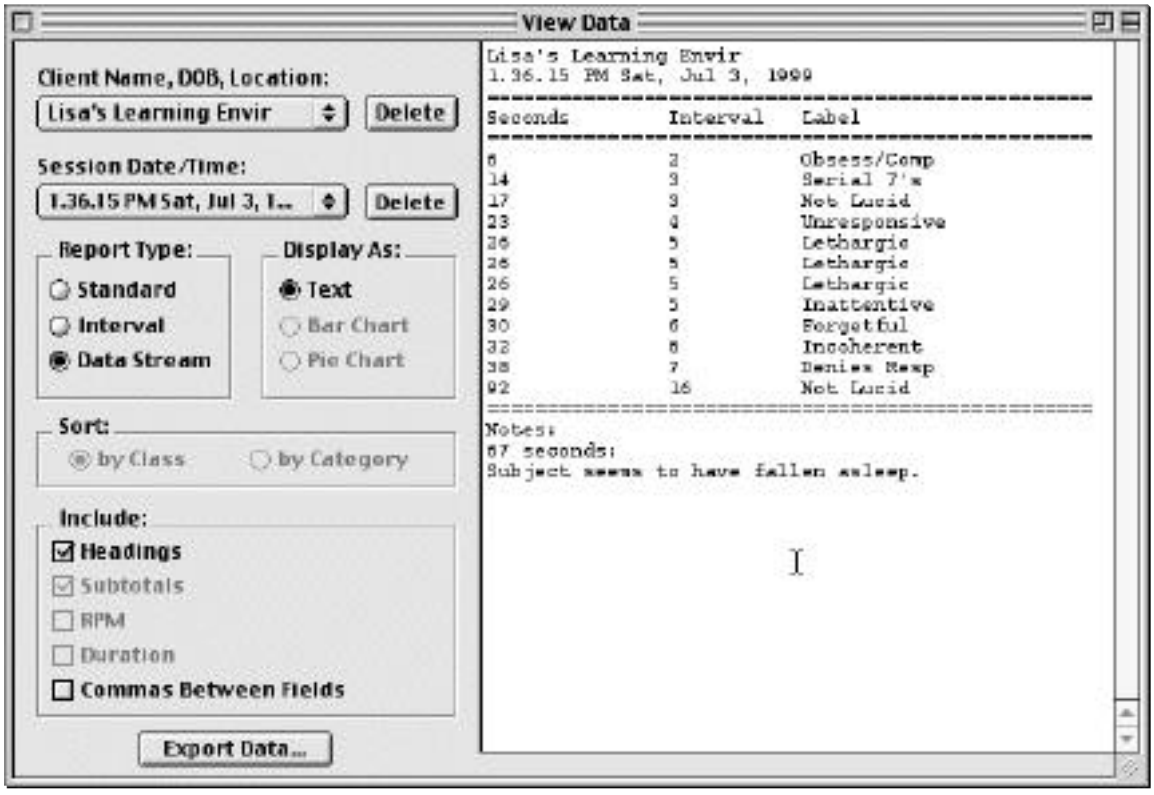
6.1 Standard vs. Interval

Summarizing your data in Standard or Interval form is a subtle distinction but one that is important to many observers of behavior. Standard form records ***every*** behavior button that is pushed. Interval form records every ***different*** button that is pushed within an interval. For example, you have set a 10 second interval for your observation. Within a single 10 second interval you push behavior button "On Task" three times and behavior button "Off Task" 2 two times. The !Observe would record this as On Task – 60%, Off Task – 40% using Standard form and On Task 50% (one interval) and Off-Task 50% (one interval) using interval form.

It is not recommended to push more than one button per interval if you are planning on summarizing your data using interval form. If this distinction does not mean anything to you or confuses you, simply leave the setting on Standard.

6.2 Data Stream

The Data stream is a detailed diary of the observation. It includes a list of the behaviors in the order you recorded them, an exact time for each behavior, and if applicable, the Interval in which the behavior occured:

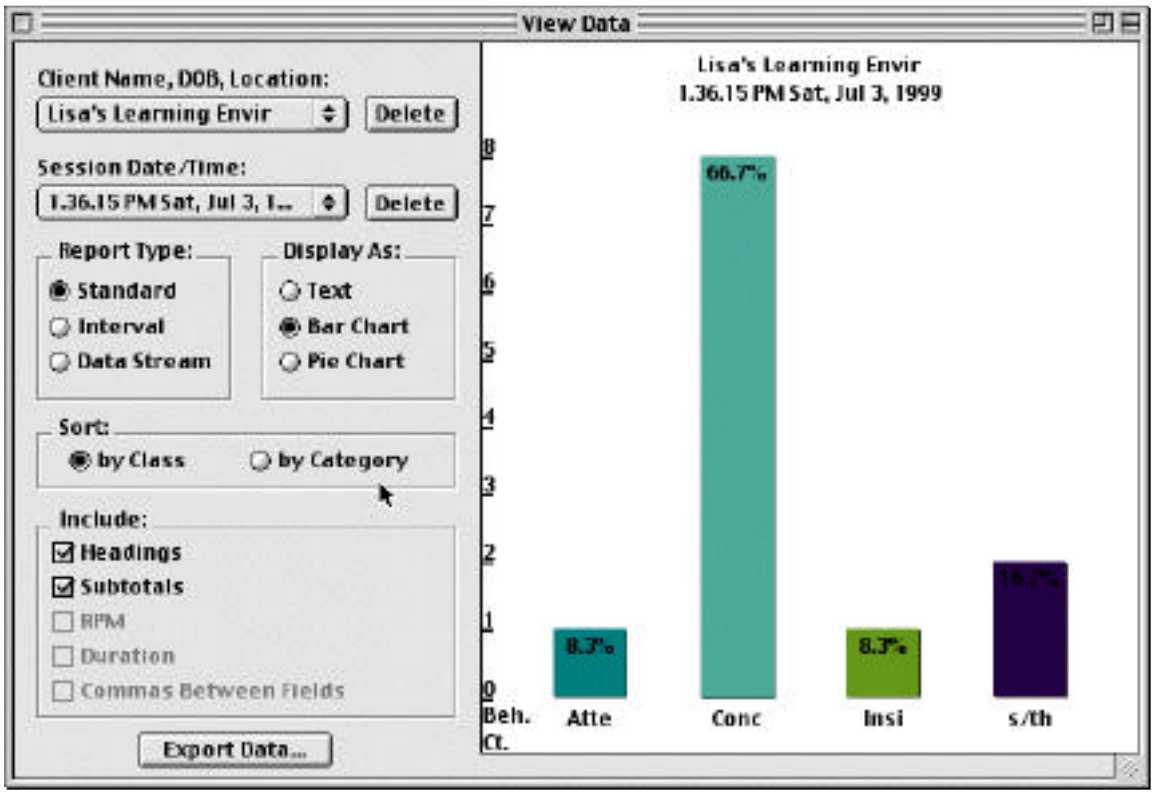


Stream of behavior analysis is an excellent way to determine cause and effect relationships in behavior.

6.3 Bar Graphs and Pie Graphs

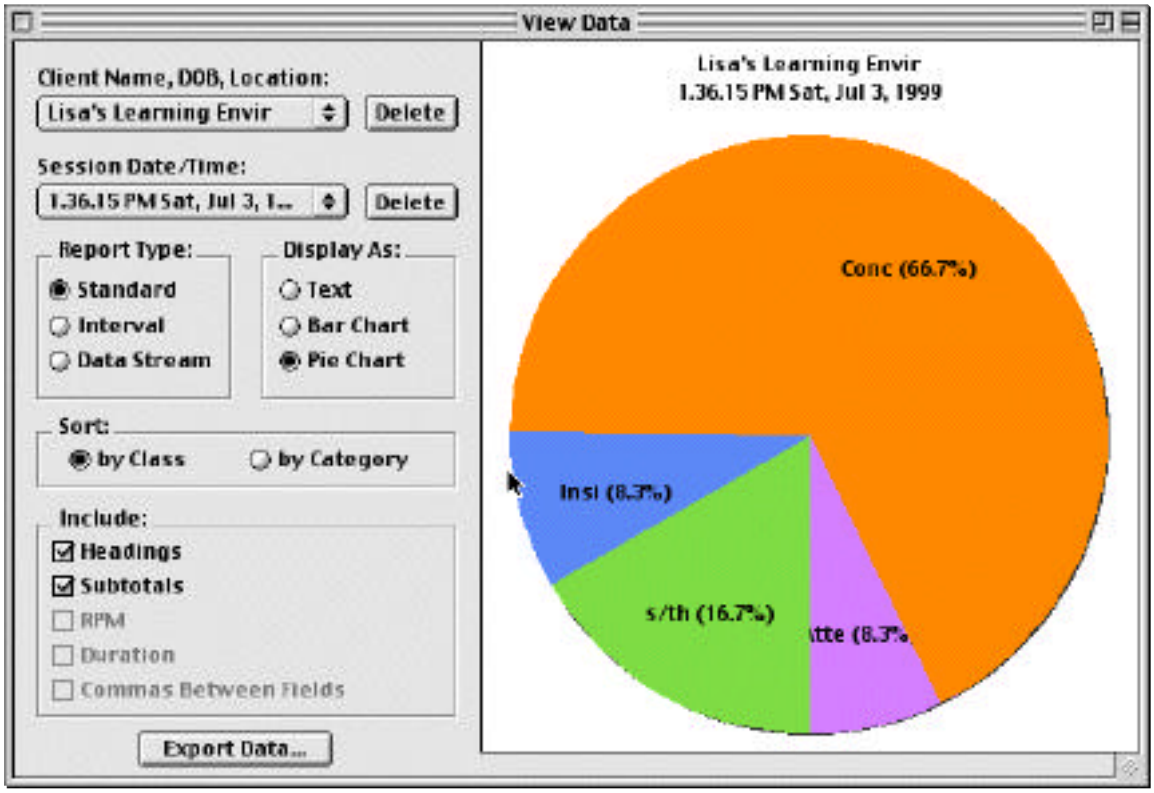
If you are a visual learner, you can choose to have !Observe render your observations as a handsome chart, rather than a screen full of text. You can choose from a Bar Graph (histogram) or a pie chart.

A Sample Bar Chart



A bar graph might look like this

A Sample Pie Chart



And a pie chart like this

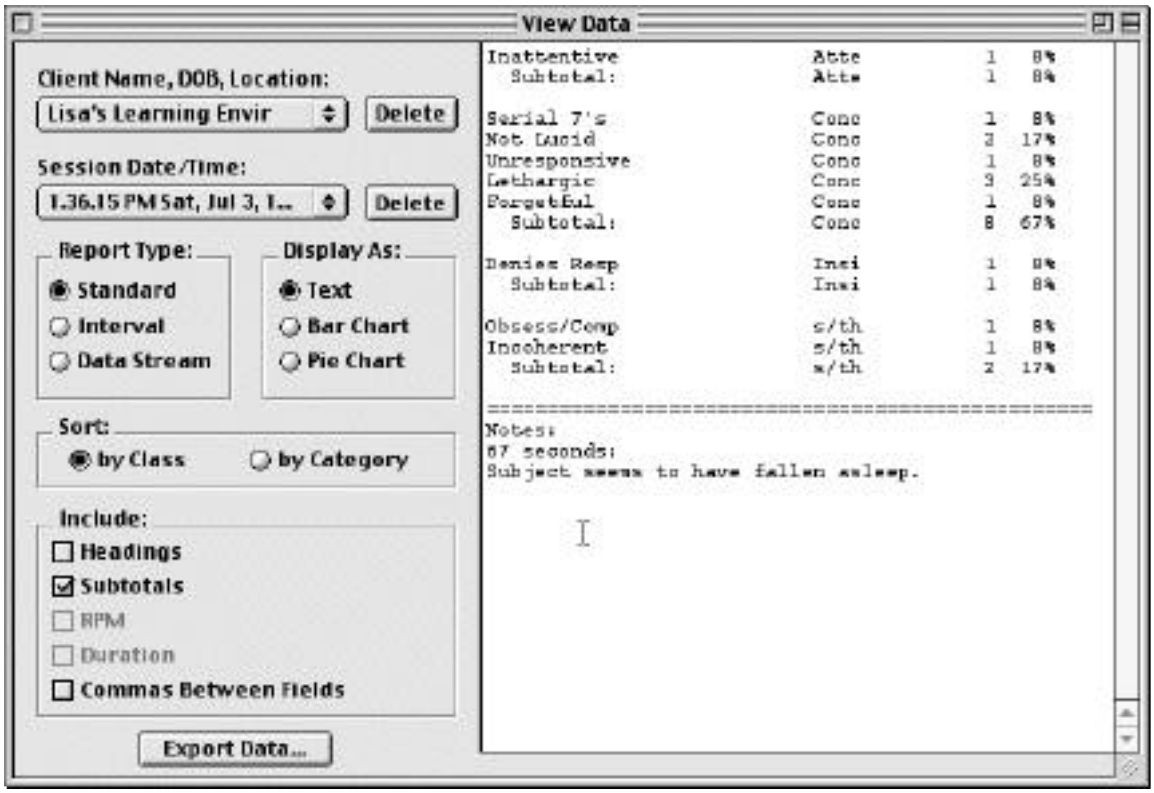
The graphs are very flexible, and provide a number of options, though certain options are unavailable when you're viewing your data as a graph. Their corresponding checkboxes will be disabled to make it clear what you can do at the moment. In addition to the settings described later, you can also adjust the size of the graphs simply by resizing the data window, either by clicking the zoom box or dragging the grow box. Graphs can also be saved to a PICT file with the "Export Data…" button or copied and pasted to other applications. They also support Macintosh Drag and Drop, so you could drag the graph directly from !Observe to your word processor or another Drag and Drop aware program.

6.4 Class vs. Category

Class and Category are flexible ways to separate your data. If you'll remember back to when we were looking into how to edit the behavior buttons, we classified our data as Positive or Negative and categorized our data as Verbal or Non-Verbal. This option will show us the behaviors in a list that is separated by the class or the category.

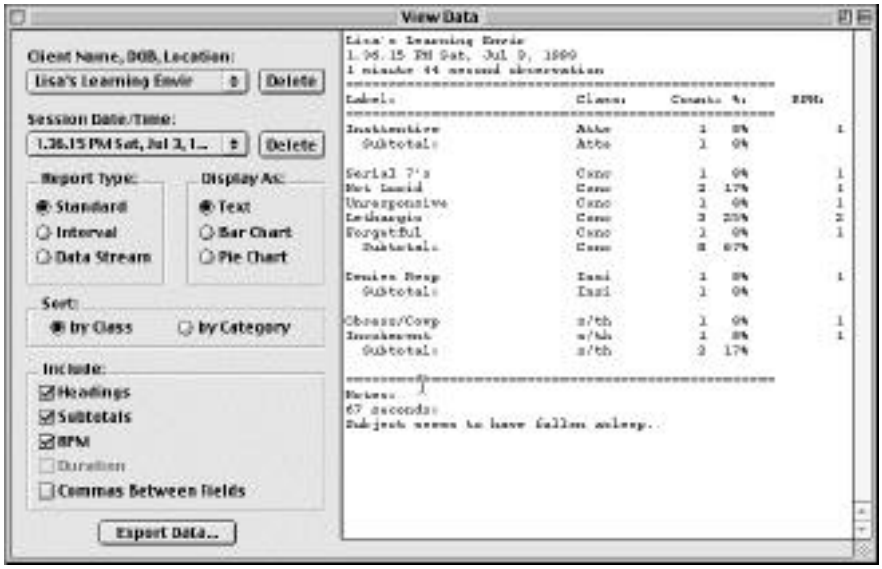
6.5 Heading

The heading option will include the demographic data on the Summary Screen, as well as headers for each of the columns of data. When that option is turned off, the screen will look like this:



6. 6 Subtotaling by Class or Category

When this option is chosen, your summary screen will automatically total the count and percentage of each class or category. To change between class and category you must choose what you wish to sort.

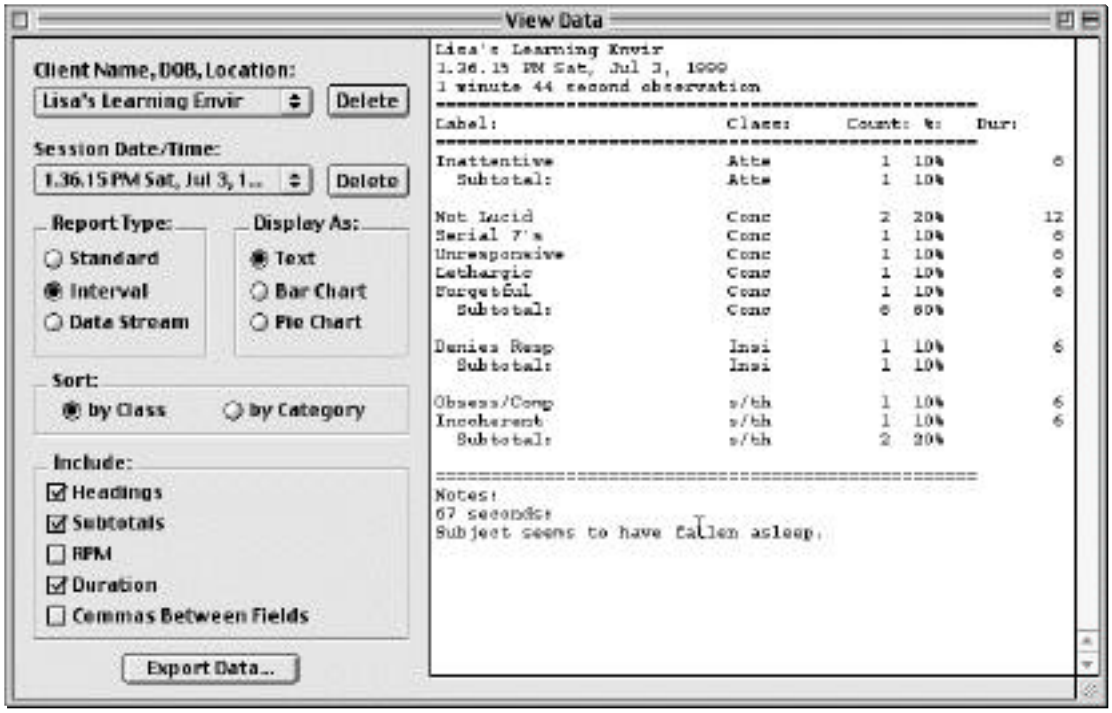


6.7 RPM (Rate per Minute)

Rate per Minute will give an estimate of how many times you can expect a given behavior every minute based upon the observation. When you summarize with RPM your screen will look like this:

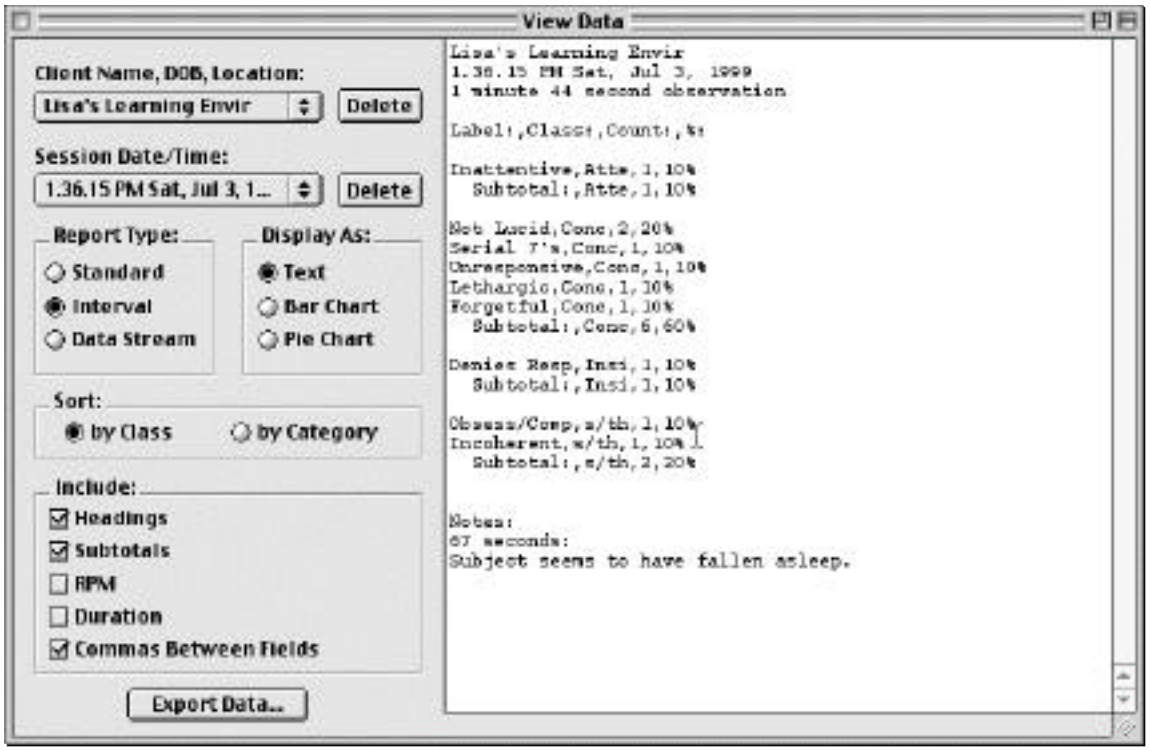
6.8 Duration

Duration is only available when the data is summarized in interval format. Duration provides a count, in seconds, of how long each behavior was displayed ***during this observation***. This assumes that the behavior was being engaged in during the entirety of each interval when that button was pushed. When the duration option is chosen the summary screen should look like this:



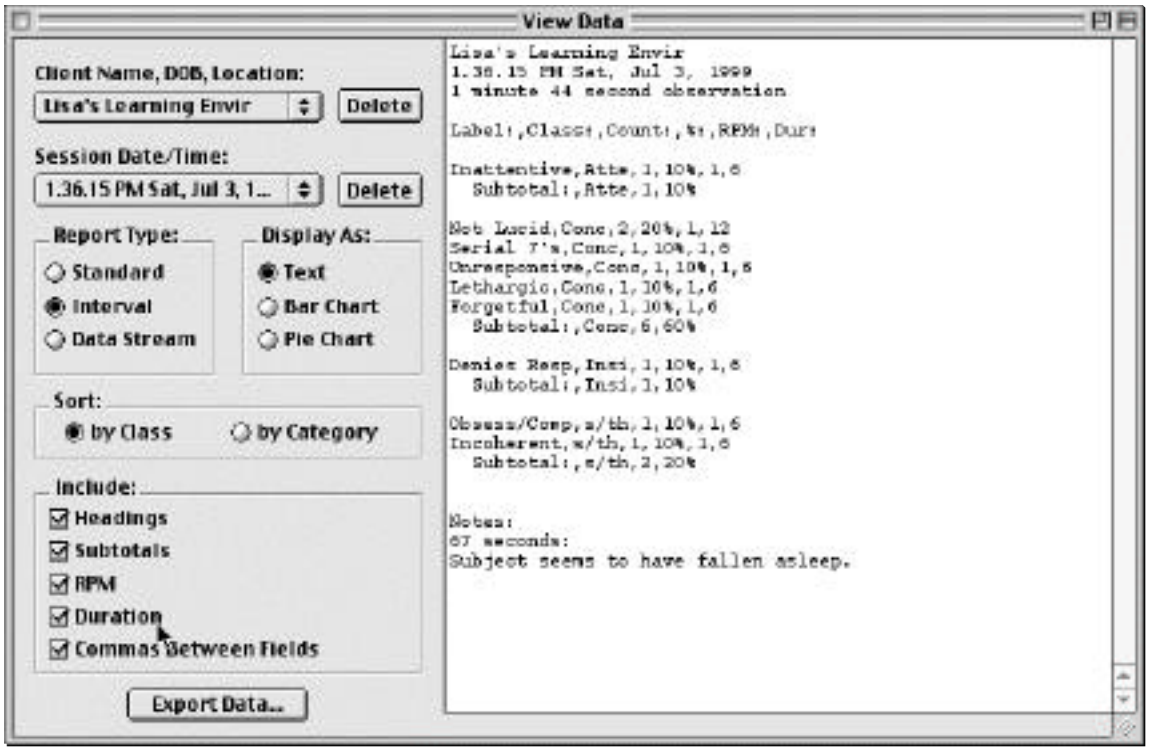
6.9 Commas between fields

Commas between fields are a useful option when you are going to export the summary screen to a spreadsheet, a database, or another program. The commas between the fields will allow most database programs to separate the information quickly and efficiently.



6.10 Multiple options

You may choose as many or as few options as you wish to display. The !Observe software allow you to configure your data in a way that is best for you and your needs -- not what is best for the programmers needs. If you did decide to choose all options and then summarize your data, you would get the following screen:



Note: Drag and Drop

!Observe supports Macintosh Drag and Drop. If you'd like to copy the report from the View Data window into another application that supports Drag and

Drop, simply select the text or image you want to copy and drag it to the new location.

7 Export

The export button allows you to save a copy of the information currently being displayed out to a text or a PICT file, depending on whether you're looking at a textual or graphic representation of your data. It will be saved exactly as it appears, so be sure you've set the options you want before you export the file. Text files can be read by most Word Processors, Text Editors, and a number of other programs. If you've used the **Commas Between Fields** option, you should be able to import your data into spreadsheets and databases as well. PICT files can be read by most graphic and word processing programs.

8 Files

Observe automatically and continuously stores your templates and observations in individual files. If you wish to manipulate those files in various ways from the Finder, such as throwing away those you're done with or sharing them with colleagues who use the software, please quit Observe first.