

VISUAL NEWSLETTER – JANUARY 2011

ELECTRONIC FILING VS PAPER

While computers promised a trend toward a paperless society, for many years it seemed as if just the opposite was occurring. Companies still printed and mailed invoices and purchase orders. They ran numerous paper reports and then needed to file them for future reference.

As storage capacity increased however companies realized that they could store information electronically for years and retrieve it at will. For about 10 years now I have recommended that clients copy their accounting databases before doing year end closings to permit direct access to the data. When a report can be re-run at any time, the necessity to run and file copies is reduced.

Data from the accounting system can be ported into Excel Spreadsheets, analyzed and saved as well for future reference. The number of invoice copies printed has been reduced even if the customer still requires one. If another copy is ever required it can be called up on the screen and reprinted. Further to this many customers are now willing to receive invoices electronically in PDF form or in some cases in more organized EDI or Excel formats.

In recent months at the request of a client with a paperless mandate I have begun to convert one of the last regular series of paper reports to electronic format, that being the Posting Registers and Journals. All reports including Registers and Journals can be printed to a Spool File. Spool files are just Text File images of a report. Text files can be easily converted into Adobe PDF Files. When you combine a series of named folders these files can be organized for easy retrieval as required and no paper needs to be printed whatsoever.

For this purpose I have created a series of folders such as APPOST, ARPOST, GLPOST, etc. and have created PDF files integrating the source and date of the different postings.

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Such a file might be called:

APPJ-21-2011-0115-1015-xx (xx = WSID)

This would indicate that this was an AP Purchase Journal Posting done to period 21 in 2011 on Jan 15th at 10:15 AM on a specific workstation noted at the end of the file name.

When the above Invoices were posted, the PDF file would automatically display to the screen so that the user could check for errors and when the file was closed it would be automatically filed to the APPOST folder. There would be no need to go to the printer, take out the report and then file it in a binder. This saves time, paper, ribbons and/or toner and of course wear and tear on the printer.

While the changes require some fairly minor programming changes the economic and workload benefits should more than compensate for any one time expenses and as a positive spinoff we can even lessen our environmental impact at the same time.

For any report that you need to send someone consider printing it to a Spool File. Another minor modification will allow you to view the Spool File as a PDF file which can then be saved and e-mailed to the party in question.

Other documents can easily go paperless. Quotations, Invoices, Purchase Orders, Earnings Slips, T4 Filings to the Government, Direct Deposits, Vendor Payments, etc. can go this route. In many cases you will also save postage by processing these documents electronically. More than enough incentive for companies to quickly move in this direction.

We can easily activate any of these program changes and instruct you in their proper use in a very short time, after which the benefits can be quite substantial over a period of time.