

Radio Days – 2013-08-24

Tip of the Week – Do Not Spill Coffee On Your Keyboard!

During the week I had the horror of watching, in slow-motion, while a client poured coffee into his keyboard. I had thought that keyboards had a membrane whose sole purpose was to prevent coffee (or any other liquid) from damaging a keyboard. If such a membrane does exist it did not do its job on that occasion.

We had to take a shopping break while my client purchased a new keyboard to replace the old one with the coffee stain.

Apparently the old keyboard still has not recovered from its drowning. The new, replacement, keyboard works as well as the old one did before the drowning, but the old one has yet to come back to its old, pre-wash, state.

The moral of this story is that electronics and liquids do not mix. Do not test the waterproofness of your keyboard until you have replaced it. We wasted quite a time while shopping and I have discovered that retail therapy does not improve everybody's temper!

Are you going to try drowning your keyboard?

Creating New Reports

I had a call during the week from a client who had to complete an Australian Tax Office form to provide details about payments to sub-contractors. Apparently the ATO (Australian Tax Office) is getting a bit twitchy about sub-contractors in the building and construction industries and is now checking the income declared by sub-contractors with the expense recorded by the businesses which pay them for subcontract work.

This sort of data matching is occurring more and more, and is made easier by the power of computers when combined with a unique identifier like the ABN which a business must now have.

The problem which my client faced was getting at all the information which his business had recorded and presenting it in a fashion which matches the format on the ATO's form. This form is, as is so often the case with the ATO's website, hidden in the volume of information available on that website. The solution, as I have found in the past, is to open the ATO website then ring the enquiry number. After pressing too many buttons on his phone my client eventually got through to a real live person rather than a computer-generated imitation of a real live person.

With the help of this real live person you can download the form that you need to fill in for the ATO and find the format of the data that you need.

Now the task is to generate the report which you need to provide the data for the ATO's form.

Creating Reports

Both QuickBooks and MYOB can create a new report from an existing report. QuickBooks can also create a new report from a blank detail or summary report. The difference between detail and summary reports is that detail reports contain all the available data and summary reports give the totals from the detail report. Both report types have their uses: it depends on what you need from the report.

QuickBooks' method of creating a new report is more elegant than the clunky method used by MYOB. Also, and this is an important point, QuickBooks' reports can be used repeatedly without the major intervention which MYOB's reports need.

All in all, QuickBooks trumps MYOB yet again.

New QuickBooks Reports

Starting with a *Custom Report* (either *Summary* or *Detail*) you can then start to customise it so that it prints the information that you need. In this case, my client needed a report which shows all the subcontractors and the amount paid to each subcontractors for the financial year ended 30 June 2013. In this case I am starting with a *Custom Detail Report* so that we can check the detail for each subcontractor to ensure that it is correct.

The ATO can be very picky so it is easier to provide the detail that they have asked for: no more, no less. To keep things easy I am starting with a *Custom Transaction Detail Report*: this gives me the chance to check every transaction which makes up the report and modify it if needed.

The first thing you see is the *Modify Report* dialogue box. The left-hand tab is active and shows the *Display* settings. Click the drop-down box to change the **Dates** to *Last Financial Year*. Other settings can be changed later if you need to.

Now click on the tab marked **Filters**. Under *Filters* click on *Supplier Type* because you are going to select the supplier type of *sub-contractor*. If you have not set all your suppliers to have a type then now is the best time to change all your sub-contractors to have a supplier type of sub-contractor. This little bit of effort now makes running this report so much easier when you need to run it next year. All you need to remember is to remember to enter a supplier type when you add a new sub-contractor. Next year you will just have to run the report and it will all work as if by magic!

Click on *OK* to run your report. You should have all the correct details on the screen but you will need to make one last adjustment: at the top of the report you will need to change the **Total By** to *Supplier*. This will give you the total for each supplier: just what you need for the ATO.

You may also find that you have more details than you need. You may just ignore these extra details or you can remove them. In QuickBooks this is easy: you just drag the diamond to the right of the column which you wish to remove all the way to the left of the diamond to the left of the field that you wish to remove. You can also use this diamond to change the width of a column: just drag the diamond to the right of the column further to the right to make a column wider or to the left to make that column narrower.

As you will need this report next year it is worth spending a little time to make sure that everything is correct. Once you have the report just so you can then memorise it so that, when you come to do the same report next year, it will just take a few mouse clicks instead of the trouble which you took to get the report for this year.

The first step is to get a more useful heading on your report. Click on **Modify Report** then click on **Header/Footer**. Change the *Report Title* to something more meaningful, perhaps *Contractor Payments*, and now everything should be just as you will want it for next year. Now it is time to memorise your report.

Memorising a report is easy: just click on the button marked *Memorise ...* at the top of the report then click on *OK*. Now you are ready to print the report when next year comes around. To print this report select *Reports » Memorised Reports » Memorised Reports List* from the menu: it will probably be the one at the top of the list.

New MYOB Reports

Creating the MYOB report is just that bit more fiddly than creating the QuickBooks report. In MYOB you must select one of the purchases reports: from the menu select *Reports » Index to Reports*. Now select *Purchases* then either *Purchases [Supplier Summary]* or *Purchases [Supplier Detail]* then click on *Display Report*. If you click on *Advanced Filters* the program will create a new window then hide it.

If you have clicked on *Display Report* you will then see the report for all suppliers for the current month. This is not what you want, so you must customise the report. You then have to select each of your sub-contract suppliers by name (a daunting task if you have a lot of suppliers) and the date range (from 1 July to 30 June of the appropriate years) then click on *Run Report* in the top left-hand portion of the window. This will display the report for the dates and suppliers which you have selected. If there is a problem just change your suppliers and / or the date range the *Run Report* again.

This is not nearly as elegant as the way that QuickBooks creates reports, but it is the best that MYOB can do.

Further Information

Nothing this week