



Note – this newsletter is now available online in our Members Club, where you will also find all the speaker presentations, information about enhancements, and many other useful pieces of information.

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Dates for Your Diary in 2006

17/01/06 - Committee Meeting (SES, Winnersh)

09/02/06 – Istug AGM (SES, Winnersh)

13/06/06 – Istug Meeting (venue tba)

The agenda for all the above meetings where relevant will be published on the ISTUG Web Site at www.istug.com. Full online booking facilities exist, non-members may be asked to pay a guest fee, and where this is the case full details will be given at the time of booking.

Reminder

Please can I remind you that we are run purely on member subscriptions and without them, we would not be able to provide the service that we do to our members.

Recently we have had many subscriptions paid late, or have had to send reminders to members – we do not like having to do this. If the invoice from Istug should be addressed to someone other than the Istug member, please let us know; this will prevent invoices from “going astray” or not getting through to the correct addressee.

If you have a Purchase Order system that will reject our invoice unless a PO has been raised please can you ensure that you have completed the correct documentation before passing the invoice for payment; this will reduce the number of invoices that are returned to us. If you would like reminding of your annual renewal date please contact Istug.

Many thanks for your help.

2005

The year in review

2005 has again been a mixed year for Istug. We started the year with the 2004 AGM where we launched the new website design and presented some very positive feedback from the 2004 Conference. Following the comments from members about meeting locations we decided to repeat the Awareness Day North and South, as we had done successfully in 2004. Unfortunately, the attendance at the Leeds location was very disappointing; we will be counselling members further to find out more about meeting requirements – locations and content being the main focus. We will be contacting individual members to ask them to complete the meeting survey – if you have strong views that you would like to be considered please contact Nicole James, njames@istug.com 0118 9813223, who will give you access to the survey.

The great success of the year was again the conference – with 15 sponsors it was better supported than last year and most sponsors have asked to be involved in the next Istug Conference – keep checking your newsletters and the website for dates. More on the 2005 Conference can be found later in this newsletter.

Thank you all for your continuing support; the more involved you are the better service we can provide for you. Our aim is to deliver what YOU want, not what we think you need. The full Business Plan and results will be presented at the AGM on 9 February 2006 at Sage, Winnersh.

We would like to wish you all a very productive and prosperous 2006.

Did you know?

In version 5.5 of sageline500 there are 2 menu options available which are not put on a menu by default. These options are called combined enquiry for Sales and Purchase ledger.

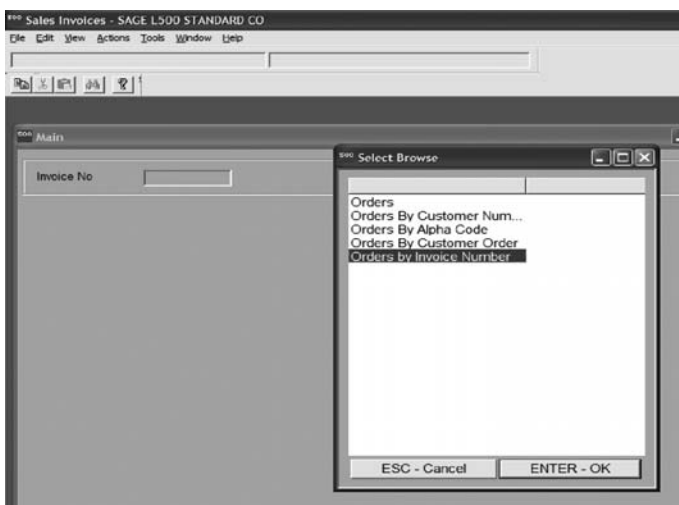
The enquiry will look at an archive file and the live open item file at the same time. The options are called *sl_comb_item_enq* and *pl_comb_item_enq*.

One problem, the Purchase ledger enquiry does not have an option to include closed items and therefore will not search closed items in the live open item file but will search closed items in the archive file, confused? This has been reported to Sage and they agree it is a bug and will be corrected.

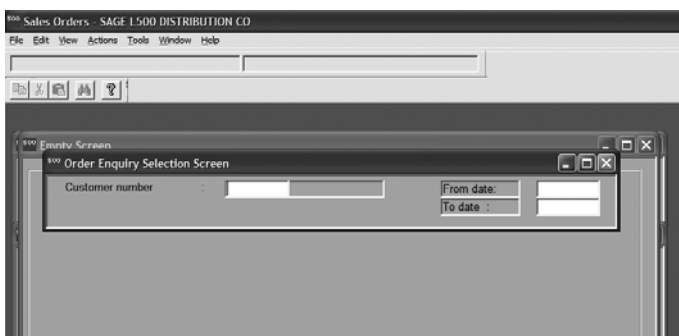
Chris Blythe's top tips for 2006!

ENHANCED SEARCHING:

1. Release 5.5 has SOP search by Invoice number (i.e. OP/xxxxxxx number) in the Browse in SOP Invoice entry



2. Telesales has had search by Invoice number for about 15 years! It also has search for orders for an individual customer or product, but only return orders between chosen dates.



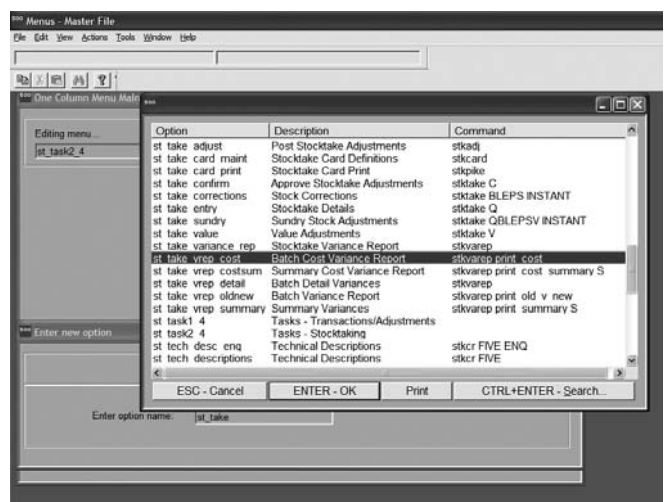
3. Project DA0432 (Requisitions from stock) introduces a number of additional items of functionality in SOP, e.g.
 - A. Search on the long and short descriptions when entering a detail line.
 - B. Automatically allocate all available stock to an order line which demands more than the free stock
 - C. You can print the long description on Picking lists

D.A0432 also introduces the concept of "Internal" customers. You don't have to bother with this to get the enhancements shown above – just leave the "Internal Customer" flag at N(o) on your customer master file. Similarly you will not need to populate the extra 2 fields in ST-GL cross references (But will need to enter valid GL posting codes for STNLOPIIAC and STNLOPIRAC system keys)

I haven't tried this out in all circumstances yet, but it certainly seems to work OK in a normal SOP environment. Ignore Internal customers and get extra functionality anyway simply by turning the project on!

STOCKTAKING REPORTS

As well as the 2 standard reports on the stocktaking menu, there are several others available in the stocktaking options (not a lot of people know that!). Try adding them to the stocktaking menu and see what they can do for you!



NOT ENOUGH DECIMAL PLACES IN SPECIAL MATERIALS IN BOM ASSEMBLY ENTRY

This one pops up regularly. The system key STQTYDEC controls not only the default number of decimal places for Stock item quantities (and is typically either 0, 2 or 3), but

also the number of decimal places allowed when entering quantities of Special materials in BOMs.

Where the special material is Labour Hours, on a fast production line (e.g. you might make 1000 packs of sausages per hour on a single line) you might need more like 6 decimal places to get accurate costings.

You can get round this problem quite easily on products by setting up special units (e.g. BMEACH for EACHES running with decimal places!) and using the standard unit conversion functionality, but this does not work with Special Materials.

So you need to set up a database trigger that detects an insert where the warehouse code is blank and updates the number of decimal places held on the BOM detail line.

The good news is its easy to set up in SQL (about an hour to set up and document), the bad news is that you have to enter the line with the fewer decimals first, press Enter to confirm, (at which point it writes the row and so the trigger is activated) and then re-enter the quantity with the increased number of decimals.

It works though and at minimal cost, avoids bespoking the programs, and should have no significant system overhead.

Always ensure that you inform your support resource if you are going to use triggers, otherwise it's very difficult for them to support you!

Newsletter Articles

Please can you send any articles for the next newsletter to Nicole James, Istug Technical Director. Anything you would like to be published is acceptable – letters to the editor, user stories, hints and tips, comments on Istug and the way we do, or do not, fulfil members requirements. We are here for YOU and this is YOUR newsletter.

Meeting Topics

If any of you have a specific topic you would like to see covered at a future meeting, please contact Nicole James, Istug Technical Director. We are open to all suggestions.

We are also in need of members who are willing to present to the group – it is YOUR user group, please get involved – if anyone would like to volunteer, please contact Nicole.

Job Sought:

CS/3, Enterprise or Line500 System Manager - North West England

Most recently employed for 7 years as IT Manager supporting and managing a 24 user CS/3 system on SCO Unix.

Project management of upgrade to SL500 on W2000 with implementation of SOP, Invoicing, EDI In, EDI Out. Report writing and data extraction to spreadsheet using Report Writer and Crystal Reports. Interfaced Sage to bespoke Sales Order Processing and Invoicing system using Tetralink. Familiar with EDI - Orders, Acknowledgements, ASNs, Invoices and Credit notes. Provision of email and web access with spam and antivirus management. Managing VPN and remote access, building and maintaining SCO, Linux and W2000 servers. Hardware and Software procurement, software licence management.

I have over 25 years experience in IT, in previous roles I've done the whole software lifecycle from requirements gathering through solution selection, workshopping and implementation with EFACS and MAX. Even further back in time I worked on the design, development and support of the UNIPLAN ERP system.

Due to compulsory redundancy I'm available immediately for permanent or temporary positions. References and full CV available on request.

Further details on my web page www.zen24530.zen.co.uk

I can be contacted on 07957 224379 or by email at zen24530@zen.co.uk.

Grabbing the Bull by the Horns

I would like to thank Istug for organizing the Sage user conference in Blackpool. I found it very interesting and informative.

The different third party companies who attended gave good presentations which helped me a lot with my current project. What was of most use to me was being able to talk to other end users about some of the questions or even solutions they had to different issues. Without being disrespectful to resellers I found that speaking to some of the endusers was more beneficial than speaking to a consultant from a reseller and far cheaper. Good independent consultants however are worth their weight in gold and a day spent with them proves to be very productive.

The project I was given by the company that I work for was to upgrade our current Sage Line 100 system to database based package. After deciding to stay with Sage (better the devil you know) I looked for a reseller, found one and then together we decided that Sage Line 500 was the best package to upgrade to. Compared to the price of such packages ten years ago Sage Line 500 was a bargain, then came the crunch:

- the price to engineer the preparation of installation
- the price to prepare for the installation
- the price to install Sql server
- the price to install Sage Line 500 with demo data
- the price to train us how to use the demo data
- the price to sit down and go through our business process to ascertain how we should use the system

– the list goes on. I was quoted 45 days plus 20 days training and 5 days documentation at “£x” per day, which amounted to quite a sum to get us up and running. What I decided was to get the reseller to install Sql and Sage and give me system key/ manager training which took up two days. I subsequently uninstalled the whole system and reinstalled it myself from the notes I had made which gave me a better

understanding of Sql and sage and how they work together. I told the reseller that we needed time to play with the demo data before requiring their services and then proceeded to go through the system to see how it works which was more time consuming than complicated but then again very educational. I acquired the help from Rachel Heard who gave me about 5 days of her time at a very good price on a “how to” basis and training on Forms designer and Enquiries.

I also received a couple of one liners from Chris Blythe which probably saved me a “Day” as well. We had 6 days training on the basic ledgers from the reseller and we are now at a stage where we can go live and the cost to us has been about 9 reseller days.

The benefit of implementing a system yourself is invaluable, it gives you a better appreciation and understanding of SQL Server, Enterprise Manager, Sage Line 500 and databases in general while at the same time being cost effective. It also adds a “Big Notch” to your C.V.

What would be very useful to an eager end user would be able to go on the Sage accreditation courses that are held for resellers to show them how to install and to know how the different modules work especially modules such as project accounting and project billing which are quite intense even for the reseller to know everything about.

I hope this is useful to any other endusers who have an opportunity to implement a system.

Best wishes to Rachel Heard who is going to give birth in December to two independent consultants who I have already “penned” in to assist me on my next implementation when Roman Abramovich gives me a call.

Regards

Andrew Magadah.

Upgrading from Unix to SQL

Royal Academy of Music

Summer 2005

The RAM has been looking to upgrade for some years from the UNIX platform to SQL.

The previous IT setup at RAM had a senior person who would have nothing to do with Microsoft. A change in the IT staff meant that I had a fair hearing; they looked at all aspects constructively and agreed with my boss the Finance Director to put a project in place but not to ahead at this stage.

Once a decision was made it became obvious that we needed outside help because of the scant resources we had available. We appointed a project leader from outside and the project manager was appointed in January 2005.

Various meetings were set up at RAM, we also met with our Sage reseller FD Systems and Teksys, our infrastructure partner.

FD were asked to cost the project (the costs included a new Microsoft server). This was not easy as it included much bespoke work that was done for FD by outside contractors. (In fact they were the original contractors that FD used when we bought the Unix version). The additional programmes that were written linked payroll to another UNIX database and, as some of payroll had bespoke work, this had to be outsourced as well.

A timetable was then prepared between the project manager, RAM IT and Finance staff and FDS.

On 28 February 2005 the project was given the go ahead. A pre-implementation meeting was held with all partners on 6 April 2005. Another key restraint was our year end of 1 August 2005; two weeks later, 16 August 2005, was the suggested go live date.

A revised detailed timetable was later prepared and the go live date of 16 August 2005 was agreed. All the Sage products were tested in detail by putting batches through the systems and we also did a parallel run on payroll.

Checking did pick up errors in some of the bespoke work; we also found screens and other things to be switched on for the new version; I cannot but emphasise the need to do detailed checking of all the systems.

On the positive side it all went well, the amendments were made and we went live on the due date. I would like to stress that you should not be worried about going live at year end because, providing everything is checked thoroughly, it should have no impact.

Mike Cherry Financial Controller

Istug Business Partner Support Survey 2005

Thank you to those of you who let us know how your Business Partner has performed over the past year (good or not so good). This award is for quality of service; your views are important.

The results of this years survey will be announced at the Istug AGM, 9 Feb 2006 at Sage, Winnersh.

Istug 2005/06 AGM, 9 February 2006

Come along to the AGM and learn more about Line 500 Version 6.0 from Sage including:

- Universal Client & Usability
- API solution
- Additions to F, D, M & S areas
- > 20 MBE Enhancements
- Sage BI; Paperless
- Platform Updates

Many other topics will be covered; we will also be presenting the Reseller of the Year Award 2005.

Join Istug

If you are not yet a member of Istug – you are not finding out about the things that could benefit your business, and quite possibly reduce your IT costs.

Visit our Open Web Site at www.istug.com and JOIN TODAY.

Our Mission Statement

“To be the Independent Organisation that represents users of Sage Enterprise products.”

Istug Annual Conference 2005

12 - 13 September

De Vere Herons' Reach



Melvin Fletcher and Harry Pounder from Datalinx Computer Systems

Thank you to those of you who attended the 2005 Conference in Blackpool; and special thanks to our sponsors and speakers. Again the conference was a great success, even though we had fewer delegates than we had hoped for – those who did attend gave some very positive feedback and the sessions were well attended. The magician confused and amazed those who attended the dinner and the casino tables were busy, as was the bar!



Delegates networking in the exhibition area



The Tokairo stand at the exhibition

The attendees were a completely different mix to 2004, as can be seen by the responses to the following question:

How long have you/your company been a member of ISTUG?

	2005	2004
Less than 6 months	12%	58%
6 months to 2 year s	24%	22%
More than 2 years	64%	20%

Some of the comments we received:

"Excellent opportunity to talk to fellow users to discuss their solutions to common problems."

" Well organized, well done."

"A most valuable event. This is the first time I have personally attended, but I found it very useful!"

All the presentations are available in the Members Club along with links to the sponsor websites.

Dates for the next Istug conference will be announced when confirmed.



Version One Ltd at the exhibition



Delegates at the Practical Logic stand



The Systems Practice plc stand