



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 2004

08/09/04 - Committee Meeting (SES, Winnersh)

18 & 19/10/04 - 2 Day ISTUG Conference (Wychwood Park, Crewe)

24/11/04 - Committee Meeting (SES, Winnersh)

The 2005 Calendar will be published on the website as soon as the dates have been agreed by the Committee.

The agenda for all the above meetings where relevant will be published on the ISTUG website 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.

12 Years On

This year sees ISTUG hosting its first two day conference in October at Wychwood Park, Crewe. The two days are packed full of useful and interesting presentations, events and discussions, details of which can be seen on our website.

This is a far cry from our first meeting of the Tetra User Group as it was then called in 1992 when some forty members attended at the Hampshire Hotel in London. The burning issues at that time were payroll, which was always full of bugs, a nominal ledger which had a tendency to lose its master file and the fact that half the dealers did not let on that discounts were available on upgrading. Tetra did not attend as they were rather anti-User Group seeing it as a threat rather than a useful tool.

How things have changed. Nowadays Sage is very supportive of the User Group and we in turn work closely with Sage so that we all benefit from our experiences through a better understanding of the systems and system improvements implemented at the request of our members.

One other amusing item was in our first newsletter we had an article from "Our Mole In Tetra" and proceeded to give some trade secrets away. In fact all that was published was already out in the public domain but Tetra spent months looking for the non existent mole!

As a final note we have come a long way over the last twelve years the improvements in the systems, the attitude and close working relationship between ourselves and Sage has helped to foster a partnership which can only be of benefit to us all.

Thank you to all of you and especially those of you at Sage and the committee members who have worked so hard to build this close relationship.

Jonathan Lassman

ISTUG July Meeting

We have changed the structure of our meetings following comments from members and this was reflected in the July presentations. We request that any product presentations are in the form of a case study, preferably with customer input. We were very fortunate that Datel and Version One customers were able to present to the group giving the attendees a feel for more "real life" experiences. Codis gave a demonstration of their Exceleator product and told us how some of their customers use the product to resolve specific issues. I would also like to thank Simon Taylor, Nelsonbach, for giving us an insight into the way that his company forecasts sales volumes with a 3rd Party product.

The afternoon started with David Mitton from Syscap telling us about Sage Finance and the benefits of Leasing over Buying.

• Rentals

- 100% deductible against taxable profit
- Off balance sheet
- Release additional Capital from:
 - Annual maintenance fees
 - Planned/unplanned IT purchases

• Advantages

- Price Certainty
 - Fix the price of software purchased
 - Fixed price 3+ year support/maintenance
- Flexible upgrade options (Systems Change Allowance)
- Release additional working capital
- Accelerate business growth

To end the day, Gill Berry from Sage gave us an excellent run through of the Version 5.5 functionality and more of a feel for the product.

For those of you who could not make it to this meeting, the presentations are in the Members Area of the website.

ISTUG System Awareness Day

For the first time we held the Awareness Day twice, in Birmingham then at Winnersh. Both meetings were very well attended, total attendance was 50% higher than usual. We will certainly repeat this next year; again at Winnersh and hopefully at a location further North than Birmingham.

The System Awareness Day focussed on the areas of the product that the user has control over and can utilise to improve performance and efficiency. Chris Blythe presented on the TCR System and Archiving, Dave Patterson covered Printing and Paper Types and Arie Koppenhol from Sage took us through Implementing a Sage Solution. Arie also took questions from the attendees - these, and the answers, can be found with the meeting presentations in the Members Area of the web site. All sessions were very well received; we had some excellent feedback, some of which can be seen in the "Members Comments" in this newsletter.

Thank you again to all the presenters. I hope that we can continue to provide such high quality information to our members throughout 2005.

We are open to suggestions for an Awareness Day topic, please contact Nicole James on 0118 9813223 or at njames@istug.com if there is anything you would like to see covered. If you can provide a meeting room in the North of England for 50-60 delegates, please can you also contact Nicole.



System Backups

Thinking that you have good backups is comforting.

Knowing that you can recover your system from your backups allows you to sleep at night.

Q, *When is a backup NOT a backup?*

A, *When it contains only 99.9% of the files required.*

We had backed up our Sage server diligently for years. We send the tapes off site as for safekeeping. We tested that we were able to read the tapes every month. We replace the tapes with new ones every 12 months.

What we had never done was a full recovery onto a virgin server. When we did we found that key files were missing!

The reason was that we did not have open file agent on the Sage server. Whilst we shutdown the ORACLE database each evening for backup the BTRIEVE files holding key data were kept open by the AutoQ user that remained logged in over night.

We had felt that the cost of renting a server for a few days was unnecessary, however I now know that it was money very well spent.

Can I encourage you to do a test recovery some day soon, you may find you have a similar experience.

By a Sage system manager who wishes to remain anonymous as he is yet to admit this to his MD.

ISTUG 2 Day Conference 2004

The first 2 day ISTUG Conference will take place later this year and I hope that you will join us at this unique event. There will be Third Party presentations, user case study presentations, an exhibition area and the usual SES Product Update. In addition, we are hoping to have an Sage walk in "clinic" with Sage Module Experts and online systems to look at your queries and issues on both days. There will also be evening entertainment and many opportunities for networking and meeting with SES staff and other users.

The event will take place at Wychwood Park, near Crewe on 18 & 19 October 2004.

We hope to see you all there – At a cost of less than half a day's consultancy, can you afford to miss out?

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.

Jobs Sought

System Manager

Experienced in the management of a 48 user Tetra C/S3 system on AIX and Sage Enterprise on both AIX and W2K/SQL2K. Modules include finance, distribution, telesales, manufacturing and report writer. Proficient in the use of the Sage report writer as well as Crystal, Excel, etc. Have managed implementations and upgrades, user support and incorporation of merged enterprises.
Contact 07803 747358

MBE Voting Results May 2004

Top Ten - these will be included in version 6 of Line 500 and Line 200

235924	Purchase Order Processing	Purchase Orders	Can we have a 'Goto page' in PO entry please. Can be tedious checking large orders.
241034	Inventory Control	G/L Distribution Analysis/Post	Period No displayed is the General Ledger period and not the Stock Period. We would like to default to the stock period and year. Must be able to post to a future GL period.
245030	Auditing	Audit Enquiry by Table	Would like to audit Telesales (at) tables.
246865	General Ledger	Budgets	Budgets. The suspension of GL Posting codes does not extend to the entry of budgets as well. Please can these options exclude suspended accounts/posting codes from both budget imports and the budget entry.
246944	Accounts Payable	Invoices	POP invoice and AP Invoice Batch number insufficient. We would probably increase the number available by introducing Alpha characters in the first three character positions of the batch number - so starting at 0001-9999, then A001-Z999 (as now), then AA01.
247002	MS-Housekeeping	User Profiles	We would like our User Profiles option to have the facility to create a SQL user, rather than having to go in and add this manually.
250550	Telesales- Order Entry and Inv	Customer Data (Manager)	Would it be possible to have a routine that synchronized the Sales Ledger and Telesales customer addresses when changes are made in either module? As well as being able to do the F8-Match when in the 'Customer Data' option.
080104-013RW	Accounts Receivable	Customers	In create and amend customer you can enter customer notes, but in customer enquiries you cannot view these notes. We would like to view the notes in enquiries.
120104-013SR	MS-Housekeeping	Spooler Management	In spooler Management, when you F4 to show the date it only displays the Day and Month. We would like it to show the Year
181203-013L6	Purchase Order Processing	Purchase Order Print	The customer would like to ability to be able to print on a purchase order their part number and description as well as their suppliers part number and description as set up in the supplier information file. At the moment this is not possible.

Note: The following log achieved top ten status, but has in fact already been delivered as part of project DA1245 in Line 500 v5.5. It requires the latest GL patch.

245052	General Ledger	Detail Trial Balance	GL - Detail Trial balance. We want to be able to run the trial balance with totals per period - currently you need to run it for each period separately.
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MBE Voting Results May 2004

Top Ten - these will be included in version 6 of Line 500 and Line 200

Next ten runners up. These will appear again on the next voting list.

223809	MS-Configure User Interface	Options	It is possible to set a password on a module e.g payroll. First entry of the option requests the password, but then subsequent entries do not require the password to be re-entered, until you'd logged out and logged in again. This is a potential security issue. Could it be modified to always ask for a password?
240218	Purchase Order Processing	Purchase Orders	Enhancement request to enable line numbers to be displayed on the purchase order enquiry screen. The pop_order_detail table contains a column called order_line_no. The justification for this request is that PO line numbers are detailed on the MRP/MPS
241670	TCR	Drilldown	Request for new TCR Drilldowns into: stock histories enquiry, and the customer / supplier price list and info routines.
243406	MS-Configure User Interface	Forms	There is a limitation of 24 lines on print forms, which causes us operational issues. Can the number of lines on print forms be increased?
245641	Sales Order Entry	Sales Orders	Sales Credit checking. When a statement account is assigned to several customers, the credit checking is still based on the credit limit on the order customer. We'd like a flexible way to indicate whether the credit limit should be based on the order, invoice or statement customer.
246870	Accounts Receivable	Transactions	Transaction Enquiry. The ageing analysis is shown in base currency only. It would be extremely useful to have the ageing in foreign currency as well. At present you have to add all the open foreign amounts up manually.
247249	General Ledger	Journal Entry	In Journal Entry there is a column called Account Reference, this shows the description of the posting code account. Please make this available on the F10 print.
250576	Sales Order Entry & Invoicing	Sales Orders	A credit stopped order still has stock allocated to it therefore stopping stock being supplied to another customer. If when an order is entered it starts as credit stopped then it is easy for an operator to not allocate, but we would like the stock to be de-allocated when an order is credit stopped. System wide option.
101203-013HU	Purchase Order Processing	Purchase Invoices	The customer would like the system to prevent PO Invoices being raised when 'GRN required' has been ticked on the order & the order hasn't been receipted. They don't have DA0533 licensed so they get the 'invoice quantity is more than the quantity received'
240204-014IJ	Inventory Control	Stock Summaries	The customer would like to enhance the system to give a warning message when deleting stock items with stock history records.

Member Comments

These are some of the comments I have received from members over the past few months:

“Many thanks for posting the awareness day presentations. They are excellent!”

“Just a short line to say thank you for the effort put into yesterday’s presentations in Birmingham. Chris Blythe’s TCR presentation has helped me to get this working in 10 minutes flat this morning (on Oracle/AIX too!) and I’m sure we’ll be able to reap the benefits. Looking forward to Wychwood Park later this year. “

“If I find myself using Sage products in my new role then I will recommend ISTUG membership - even the one session I attended was helpful to us.”

“I am becoming increasingly concerned about my inability to attend events but my reason may well apply to other members.

We have to submit our management accounts on the 2nd Tuesday of the month end; this means that meetings are being held around the busiest time of the month. We normally find that the third week is quietest and this would be the best time for meetings.

Perhaps you and your executive could consider this.”
(This has been considered when preparing the 2005 calendar)

Did You Know?

MBE 222732 - OP - Enquiry only option in price lists.

This can be achieved using a simple report writer reading the ‘sop_price_list’ file and selecting a range of products and / or price lists with the use of user prompts.

MBE 206902 - RW - Run Batched Reports to be improved.

It is currently possible to chain reports which display user prompts in our current version. However, it would be very useful to be able to add batched reports to a menu option.

To get over this problem I have added the option ‘ Run batched reports’ to user menus outside of report writer.

As long as they know the report batch name they can run it. Warning - only use this ‘fix’ if you can trust your users.

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.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

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

YOUR COMMITTEE - ISTUG Members

Administrator

Jonathan Lassman, phone 01438 717764, Fax 01438 712157 or email jlassman@istug.com

Technical Director

Nicole James phone 0118 981 3223 or email njames@istug.com

Chairman

Gordon Hancock of University Hospital Birmingham (gordon.hancock@uhb.nhs.uk)

Details of all serving committee members can be found on the ISTUG web site, www.istug.com
ISTUG HELP LINE – Phone 0118 981 3223 or email njames@istug.com.

The ISTUG office is open daily from 09.00 to 17.30 for your calls; a message facility exists when the office is closed.

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.