



1-Minute Newsletter – May 2015

This is another installation of our 1-Minute Newsletter – we hope you find it helpful!

Please pass me along...

Many of our customers have office staff members that specialize in accounts payable and others who perform receivables, payroll or general ledger activities. Because we send the newsletter out with our monthly statement, we ask that whoever opens the mail first pass the newsletter on to the next person in the office because newsletter topics cover multiple functions in the Club Office system. Our goal is to assist users and by sharing the newsletter, it can benefit your club's operation. Thanks in advance for passing me along!

The importance of 'Run as Administrator'

If you use Windows Vista, Windows 7 or Windows 8, you need to understand that Windows doesn't like non-Microsoft installers and updaters that make changes to the Windows Registry and consequently, Windows generally prevents them from happening. Why is this important? Well, for one, we've found that after many customers' attempts to update their Club Office software, the updates don't "take" and

consequently, they are unable to use the new features and patches we've added to the software. The solution to this problem is to use the 'Run as Administrator' option when you install a Club Office update. This is easy to do: simply download the software update to your computer, and then right-click on the downloaded file to get the "Run as Administrator" option. Restart your computer afterward.

The 'publisher can't be verified' message

When you install one of our updates, you're likely to get this warning message. Here again, it's Windows' security at work, but essentially what it's telling you is that Club Data didn't pay Microsoft the exorbitant fees they require to validate our software. We use Microsoft's own development tools to develop our software applications for Microsoft's operating systems, and consequently, we see little reason to pay these extra fees simply to tell you that Microsoft thinks we're OK. The fees to validate the software are not trivial and we would have to pass them along to you in the form of additional cost. We just don't think that's a good idea because the only place you can get software updates for Club Office is directly from us and from the protected tech support site. And of course, we scan our development systems and installers for any hint of virus or malware before we publish it on our web site for you to download, so we're quite confident that our software is virus-free. So if you get this message when you install one of our software updates, just choose the "RUN" option instead of the default cancel option. Cancel will of course, not install the update at all.

"Backup, schmackup... I've got *the Cloud!*"

As many of you know, we often use ShowMyPC to connect to your computers and fix something or change a Windows configuration option or two. Because we can see your screen when we do that, we also notice little things that are running in the system tray – the small little area that's normally in the lower right corner of your screen where the time and/or other little icons may reside. Some of them are well-known to us as "cloud" or "dropbox" kinds of tools. *Look out!* Some of these have proven to be quite problematic insofar as they are running in 'real time' and intercept the data when you hit "save" or "ok" and then try to write the data to both the dropbox storage and your



computer system. But the danger here is that the dropbox/cloud application seems to take operational precedence over writing to the Club Office database and sometimes, because of the extra time required to write to the cloud *the data may never make it to the database*. YIKES!!! This is especially bad when this happens with modules that are trying to create G/L journal entries – you end up with incomplete financial data in your G/L journal!

The bottom line: If you use any cloud-type applications on your computer, you *must* turn them off during the day so they are NOT running in 'real time' and use them only at the END of the day for storing data *after* you've finished your work.

Free computers...

"One of our members just bought a new computer and gave us his old one. Can you help us get it working with Club Office?" Well, the member's sentiment is noble, but you have to ask yourself, "Why did he replace it?" More often than not it's because the old one is, well, out of date, or underpowered, or perhaps is infected with a virus or doesn't work right anymore. In any event, understand that a "free computer" never turns out to be really *free*. Many of our customers have purchased previously-owned, off-lease factory-refurbished computers that banks or other professional offices have used for a year or two and those can be *fantastic* deals because they've been professionally cleaned, tested and reloaded with modern operating systems. You'd have to perform similar work on that donated computer to be sure it'll work reliably for you, a task that could easily take 6-8 hours; *time* is the most expensive cost of all.

Did you know...

...that Club Office includes a built-in Internet Browser? Yep, it does! It's on the main pyramid menu's Utilities options and it's been there since 2007. It defaults to link directly to Club Data's web site and there are direct links to the Tech Support and software updates areas -- even to your private FTP area! You can use it to download a software update or even drag/drop backups to/from your private FTP area. You may have to enter your web site ID and password to get to those areas, but that's just normal security stuff. The Club Office Browser is just another one of our rarely-used features that has terrific potential for making it easier for you to get your work done with less effort. Worth a look!

Computer Specs

Many of our customers are replacing computers these days and in case you're thinking you might replace one or more PCs soon, we thought it might be helpful to you if we provided a list of minimal computer specifications that we'd suggest for Club Office.

- Acceptable operating systems
 - Windows 7 Home Premium, Professional, Enterprise or Ultimate versions in either 32 or 64-bit. (We don't recommend Windows 7 Starter or Windows 7 Home Basic.)
 - Windows 8, Windows 8 professional are not recommended. Windows 8.1 either 32 or 64-bit is acceptable, although it is not as desirable nor as easy to use as Windows 7.
 - No version of Windows RT is acceptable – our software cannot even be installed on it.
 - No version of Apple or Linux operating systems are acceptable, even in a Windows emulation mode.
- Processor chip
 - Either Intel or AMD processor chips are acceptable, any speed greater than 2.0 GHZ.
- Memory configuration
 - 4GB minimum for 32-bit operating system
 - 8GB minimum for 64-bit operating system
- Video configuration
 - Capable of 1280 x 1024 minimum resolution. (Most modern PCs can do much better than this.)
- Data storage
 - 80GB minimum hard disk drive. (Most modern PCs come with much larger capacity hard disks.)
 - Optional: DVD-RW/CD-RW drive (not required by our software but often nice to have)
- External Ports
 - Minimum of 1 or 2 front-access USB ports (front of the computer for easy access)
 - Minimum of 2 rear-access USB ports (back of computer, for additional peripheral items)
- Audio/Sound – no requirement
- Built-in wired network capability. Wireless is not recommended.
- Manufacturer: no requirement although we have had great success with Dell products.

Using NAS Devices as Servers – **CAUTION!**

“NAS” is an acronym for “network attached storage” and it's all the rage these days. Some companies refer to them as “my personal cloud;” popular manufacturers are Western Digital, D-Link, Seagate Personal Cloud and Buffalo Storage Systems. Many think of NAS as a replacement for a computer server since it's so much smaller, takes a lot less power and can sit on a shelf plugged into your network. But beware. It is *NOT* a good choice for use as dedicated server! The differences are crucially important to understand.

NAS is “storage,” intended for the static storage of photos, old files, videos, documents or other items that are in a digital format. The key word here is *static* which implies unchanging.

NAS devices are not designed for constant, interactive situations involving repeated, fast file access such as POS systems require. With POS, data is constantly changing as servers add items to orders, send orders to the kitchen, recall orders, move things around, put them back on hold, recall another order, etc. NAS devices are slower and do not have the inherent file sharing mechanisms built in for such quick, multi-access operation which is critically important for facilities that have more than one person using Club Office or more than one POS terminal. When used in a POS environment, an NAS system as a server is like a powder keg with a sputtering fuse.

Are NAS systems a good idea? Sure. They're a fine solution for storing a backup or making backups of your whole computers during the wee hours of the night when the business is closed. They're just not a good solution for hosting live, interactive databases and consequently, we do not recommend that they be used in that manner. Two potential problems that can arise when using an NAS device as a server are either lost data or a corrupted database that cannot be repaired.

Forewarned is forearmed...