

Newsletter for ABC Software

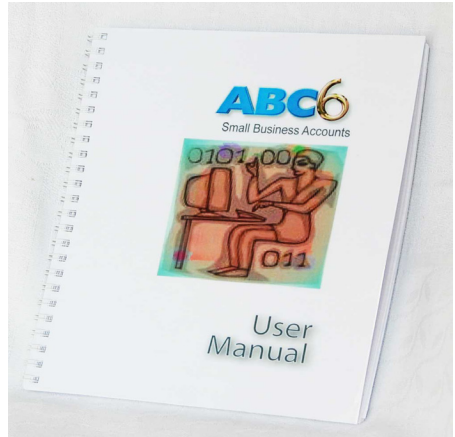
December 2011

The combination of the economic squeeze and the trend for people to use the internet more and more for shopping and locating suppliers, means that we all need to look at selling or advertising ourselves online. Our new Support website is a first step towards linking ABC Accounts to an ecommerce website.

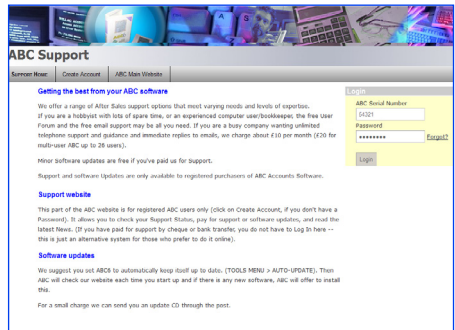
Feedback and suggestions from you are always welcome, and many of these ideas find their way into the next update of the software. An example is that the Bank Statement report now shows opening and closing balances, and has a Running Balance column. Several bookkeepers convinced us this will make their lives easier.

If you have Auto-Update turned ON, ABC will update itself automatically (provided you have paid for After Sales support).

We reprinted the ABC User Manual in December 2011 to incorporate new features of ABC6.3. You can purchase a copy for a few pounds on our website or on eBay.



Updated User Manual



New interactive Support website

Support website Password:

We have pre-registered you on this website. Your password is *Abc12345* (replace the 12345 with your real ABC serial number)

Summary of ABC6.3

Version 6.3 of ABC added some enhancements including: a versatile Diary/Calendar with Alarm calls, Stock Records that can include pictures of your stock items, Online VAT Returns, and built-in email functions (eg to send Statements or Invoices by email). These were explained in more detail in the previous issue of this Newsletter, and this should be available to read or download on our website.

Main Menu quirk

Very occasionally the big round button top left of the screen seems to stop working. If this happens, you can press ALT-M to fix it (we are looking into it). Don't double-click the button because that is Windows standard way to close a program.

Network version

If your business has grown you might find it useful to allow more than one computer to use ABC at the same time. Just upgrade to the Network version of ABC, it is easy and simple.

Using ABC5?

Our software does last a long time. ABC5 was released in 1998 and although it was replaced by ABC6 in 2005, some people are still using the old DOS ABC5. As long as you keep paying for Support we will still support you, but you should consider

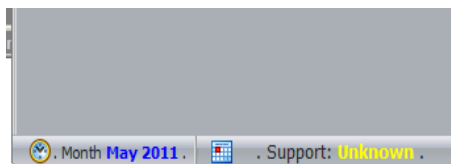
changing to ABC6 which is much more reliable, versatile and modern. Do remember that the old ABC5 will only work on old computers -- not on Windows7.

New support website

Over the past few months Chris has had to learn a new programming language PHP (he thinks it's a vile language) in order to work on ecommerce websites (ie. dynamic websites). Our ABC Support website was really just an excuse to practice using PHP to get ABC accounts to interact with the website.

When you start up ABC (version 6.350 and higher) it will check with the ABC support website and then display a note bottom left of your screen

This will show you the date your



support expires (in green if that is in the future, or red if support has expired). If ABC cannot read the website for any reason, the status will be "Unknown" in yellow.

If your support status shows green (Support is current) then ABC will try and keep itself up to date (you can turn this feature off or on by going to TOOLS > AUTO-UPDATE, at top of screen. On the website www.abc6.co.uk

you can go to the Support section and Log-On to see your support status or to renew your support by credit/debit card or PayPal. (Of course you can completely ignore all this website stuff and simply pay for your support by cheque or BACs transfer as before).

We have already pre-registered existing ABC users so you will not need to create an account. Your password has been preset as Abc99999 (replace 99999 by your real ABC serial number.) To find your Serial Number, go to TOOLS > SHOW VERSION (in ABC6) or F9 > OPTIONS > SHOW VERSION (in ABC5).

If you have only just bought ABC, you need to Register the software (ie. enter the Serial number into ABC) before the website will recognise you.

Ecommerce

Here is our idea for the future. If you are selling products in various different places (eg. your high street shop, your ecommerce website, on eBay, on Amazon, etc) you can end up with several different databases of stock items, and a great deal of work to keep them all in step. We have enhanced the ABC Stock record to include a page for such varying sales outlets (channels is the word people are using). On each product record card you could tick the boxes to specify if this product is to be sold on each

of the different channels, and maybe give a different price for each channel.

The product card will also have a picture of the product and a large detailed description (including HTML code to make it look pretty).

ABC could then export a CSV file suitable for updating eBay, Amazon, or your website, etc. Also, when people purchase products from your online stores, you can download a CSV file of those transactions and import them into ABC Accounts. All the above is quite easy to do. (Though there will always be some adjustments to the CSV files required to match YOUR particular websites, etc). But we are looking a little further ahead to where all of the above may be fully automated. When a product is purchased, the transaction will automatically appear in your ABC books. When someone on eBay purchases your last remaining stock of a particular item, ABC will automatically remove that item from sale on Amazon and your website. We think this is exciting stuff. (but then we don't get out much...).

Purchase Orders

We are adding Purchase Order Processing to ABC as an optional extra. You'll find this appearing on the Supplier Record Card soon (make sure you have auto-update turned On).

Website

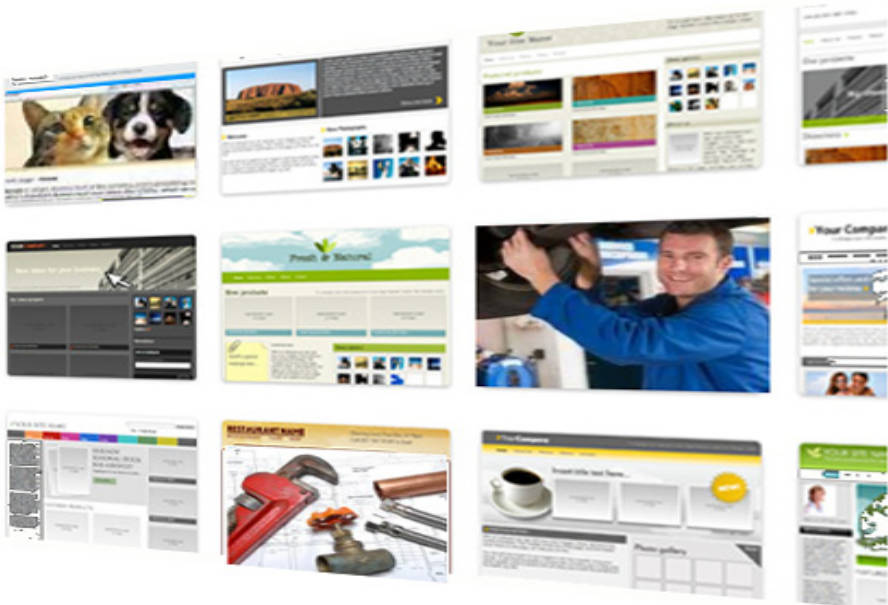
It almost goes without saying that you should have at least a simple up to date website to act as a sales brochure or advertisement and attract prospective new customers to your services. Most people these days start their search for a product or supplier by looking online.

It has also been said that it is better not to have a website at all if it gives a poor impression of your company.

website can be created to suit your business from as little as £249. A large online ecommerce shop would cost more.

If your sales have fallen off in the past year or two, it is a good idea to check how your website compares to your competitor's.

Finally, do you have a proper email address? It costs only £5 a year for your own domain name. For example, if your company is Regal Cars, and your email address is *fred334@yahoo.com*



We enjoy designing and creating websites. Updating and maintaining old websites is also a trivial task for us, either as a one-off or a regular basis.

Even starting from scratch, a simple modern professional

does that give a good impression? *sales@regalcars.co.uk* is better.

Contact us to talk about websites. We can show you some examples of recent work.

Social networks

There are hundreds of different social networking and online shopping sites available, with new ones springing up all the time. However, a few have gained enough subscribers to become market leaders.

We have put ABC onto Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Amazon and eBay, as these seem to be the important places to be seen. You should do the same. If you need help, we can assist. Think of it as another form of advertising, but cheaper than most. (Some investment of time is required). Incidentally, on Facebook and Twitter look for ABCsoftware -- all one word, that's us.



VAT Code changes

There are some subtle changes to the VAT Code selection drop down menu. All the words on the menu can now be altered by you, and there is a new column at the right hand edge labelled *Hint*. Pause your mouse over this column and a tooltip should appear to give you some information about that VAT code (eg. Zero rate applies to books, advertising leaflets, and.....). You can edit these hints to your own words.

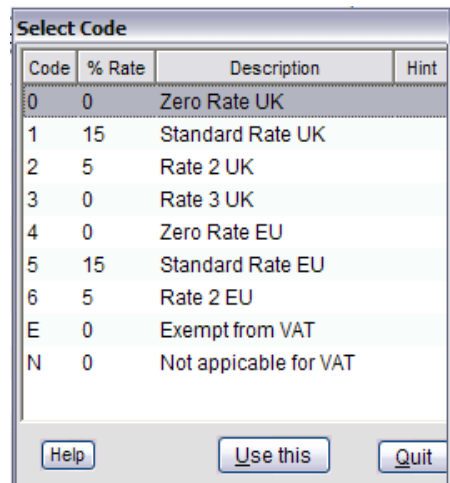
Utilities > Rarely Used > VAT.

Faster editing

ABC programs have always required you to select EDIT before you can start editing anything on screen. This has been to prevent you accidentally changing things without meaning to (particularly for new users). However, most Windows programs do not force you to do this, so in ABC we are now giving you the option to turn Off this requirement.

**Utilities > Edit Parameters
> User Input**

If you untick the box to require the Edit button to be pressed before you can change anything, then ABC will allow you to simply start typing changes on the screen as you wish. But you still have to select SAVE or CANCEL when you've finished.



Code	% Rate	Description	Hint
0	0	Zero Rate UK	
1	15	Standard Rate UK	
2	5	Rate 2 UK	
3	0	Rate 3 UK	
4	0	Zero Rate EU	
5	15	Standard Rate EU	
6	5	Rate 2 EU	
E	0	Exempt from VAT	
N	0	Not applicable for VAT	

Buttons: Help, Use this, Quit

Bank Statement

The bank statement report (CashBook > Bank Statement) has been enhanced to show opening and closing balances, and also a running balance column. This makes it look more like your real bank statement.

Page 1		
Paid Out	Received	Balance
Opening Balance:		-73.12
12345.88		-12419.00
12345.88	0	
Closing Balance:		-12419.00

The only limitation is that if you print a report that goes back to before the start of your financial year, it is not possible to show the opening balance in that case (ABC will print a note to explain this).

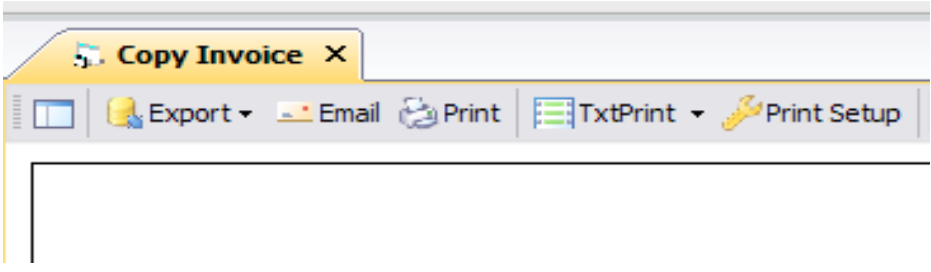
Text Print option

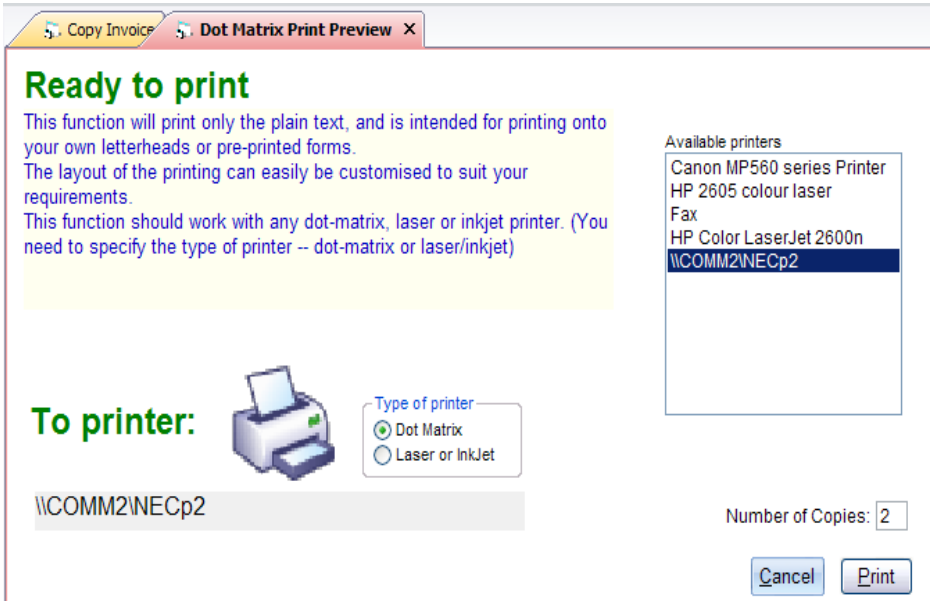
Windows regards all printers as page-print devices, and normally sends a complete picture of the page to the printer. This works well for laser and inkjet printers, but is not very good for dot-matrix or label printers that print a line at a time. Dot-matrix printers are still used for printing multi-part NCR sets.

ABC is fairly unique amongst modern software in that we have provided a special print function that can drive an old dot-matrix printer in the way that it's creator intended. We've called this Text Only printing. It is only available for producing Sales Invoices and Statements, and address labels.

When you go to print an invoice (or a copy invoice as in the picture below) you'll see the extra option TxtPrint on the toolbar. Just to the right of the button is a small down-arrow -- click this and you can select a template or layout that specifies what the printed output looks like. These files are easily customised to fit the text onto your pre-printed forms. Load them into a text editor like Notepad (file extensions are .a6i for invoices and .a6s for statements. You can have Notepad and ABC Print open on screen at the same time, which makes it quite easy to adjust the layout by trial and error to get the text to fit your pre-printed invoice or statement paper.

To send the invoice or statement to the printer, click the TxtPrint button and choose a printer and the number of copies you





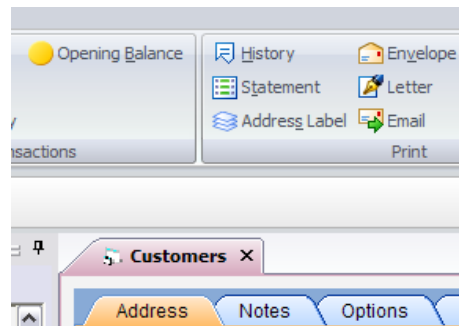
require. After specifying a printer, you do need to tick a box to tell ABC if this printer is a dot-matrix or a laser/ink jet type. (we have so far failed to find a reliable way for the program to detect this automatically).

Print a label

When you have a customer (or supplier) record on the screen there are buttons on the ribbonbar above for printing a label or a letter or an envelope. ABC will automatically fill-in that customer's name and address into the label or envelope.

This feature (which apparently is greatly envied by SAGE users who have to exit from the accounts and load a different program in order to do this useful sort of thing) has now

been enhanced so that the same printer selection screen will appear. This lets you print the label or whatever onto any printer -- dot-matrix, inkjet, or laser. You can have several printers connected to your computer, and use one just for printing labels. This is what we do in the ABC office.



Recent enhancements and bug fixes

We update ABC at least every couple of weeks and the website has lists of all the significant improvements and bug fixes over the years. We really do try to fix any reported problems and have the updated software on our website within a day or so. To fill the blank space at the end



of this newsletter, here are a few items from those lists in recent months.

- New option on Sales Invoices allows you to choose whether or not to print the Heading analysis codes on the invoice.
- Pay Money in Purchase Ledger -- sometime the money line was not visible. Fixed.
- Double-click CashBook on main menu used to select CashBook Income, which caught out a few people who were not paying attention. Now you need to specifically select Income or Payments.
- Month End changed so that at the Year End it directs you to use the Year End function

- instead (which will also complete the Month End).
- Unpaid Bill entry did not allow Credit Notes that were VAT-Only. Now it does (though we think very few people will actually need it).
- CashBook Income report sorted order can now be changed.
- A new option in the Sales and Purchase Ledgers allows you to Hide all customers or suppliers marked for Delete. They can be revealed again if you need to reprint an old report. See the Options tab.
- The Spreadsheet has gained a function to get the VAT rate from a VAT code.
- Sending VAT Return online worked correctly but the screen said "This was a test". That message was wrong and has now been removed.
- CashBook Income did not allow VAT Code 4 (zero rate European Sales). Now fixed.
- Payroll did not allow holidays to be given in fractions of a day. Now you can give someone 0.3 days holiday if you wish.
- The Account Fix utility has become even better and can repair most file problems.

ABC
ACCOUNTS

ABC Direct Sales, PO Box 203, Sale, Cheshire, M33 4XG.

Email: info@abc6.co.uk

Website: www.abc6.co.uk

Tel: 0161 282 1270