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## Newsletter #27 (Sep 25, 2006)

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### Q & A

#### Transaction Categories for Taxes

**Q: When I run a category-based report such as Charges by Category, the taxes (like Sales Tax) aren't showing up in the right place.**

A: This is probably due to the Taxes setup (Maintenance / Park Setup / Taxes). You need to make sure that appropriate categories are selected for each different kind of tax you have, because that category determines how the tax will be reported. For example, don't select things like "Daily Rate" or "Giftshop" for the Category of the taxes, because that will cause the tax to be combined with charges for those categories. Use categories like "Sales Tax", "Transient Tax", "Lodging Tax", "GST", "VAT", etc.

If you need to add more appropriate categories for taxes, you can do that through Maintenance / Pick Lists / Transaction Categories. Note that changing the category selection in the Taxes setup will not automatically fix any previous transactions. You would have to go back and manually change the Category used for each tax transaction to correct the history.

#### Reporting by Rate type

**Q: How do we make our reports show the type of rate used -- e.g. instead of just putting everything in "Daily Rate", we want to show the income separately for extra persons, holiday rates, membership rates, etc.**

A: The Rate information is not part of reporting -- only the Category of the Charge transaction inside the rate definition is used. Thus you may need to add more categories (in Maintenance / Pick Lists / Transaction Categories), and then go through each of your Rates definitions and select the appropriate category for the Charge in each rate.

### Getting back to the Transactions detail

**Q: After I do a transaction report like Receipts by Payment Method, how do I get the Transactions tab view back to showing all of the transactions?**

A: First click on the "Summarize" checkbox to uncheck it -- this changes it to detail mode, showing all of the transactions included in the current report (this is handy for investigating where particular summary amounts came from, by the way). Then you also need to clear the filtering so it shows all transactions -- click on "More Filters", then click "Reset All" and "OK". Finally, you may want to click on the Date column header to sort the transactions by date/time.

### Splitting a payment between payment methods

**Q: How do I enter part of the payment as cash and part by credit card? When I try to enter the partial payment amount it gives an error message.**

A: You need to enter the partial payment in the "Amount to pay" box, not the "Amt Tendered" box. For instance if they pay \$50 by cash and put the rest on credit card, then first enter a Cash payment with \$50 in the "Amount to pay" (delete the default value shown there and enter 50). Note: In more recent versions, you can also enter it in the Amt tendered and then just "OK" the warning that appears. Now click Payment again to enter the second part of the payment, and the amount to pay will automatically reflect the new balance to be paid by another method.

### "Balance" report showing strange dates

**Q: When I generate the transaction report "Balance Charges and Payments" and select a date range of 8/1/2006 – 8/31/2006, I get other dates in the report. Where are these dates coming from?**

A: The "Balance Charges and Payments" report uses the Reservation date to filter the transactions to be shown, not the Transaction date -- so it's showing all transactions for any reservations that started in August. This particular report is mainly for checking that reservations are zeroed-out properly. You can change this if you want by going into More Filters (after selecting the Quick-report), and then uncheck the "Use Reservation date..." box. If you need to do this often, then you can Memorize the report through Summary Options.

## Tips & Techniques

### **Using Purge to shrink the database**

When your database starts getting pretty large, you'll probably notice things slowing down. In fact it can suddenly slow to a crawl if it starts reaching the limit of your computer's RAM, causing Windows to swap part of it out to disk.

The obvious solution to this is to use the Purge function (under the Maintenance menu) to clear out old data. However there's a bit of a catch -- if you're already slowing down, especially if you're hitting the RAM limit, then it will have a hard time purging because the purge function itself takes a lot of RAM (for queuing up all of the changes to be recorded in the log and possibly transmitting them over the network).

#### Here are a few tips for purging:

First, make sure you have a good backup of your current data, which should be stored in a safe place (this is your business' historical data, so don't take it lightly). The more backups the better, and don't be afraid to use the Restore function to test the backups. You can use these backups later if necessary to look at older data (preferably on a different computer, so it doesn't risk affecting the live system).

When possible, start using the Purge function before you really need to. For instance if you're still running fine after a few years, don't wait for it to slow down -- purge any data older than 2 years before it starts slowing down.

If you're networked, only use the Purge function on the Master workstation. Make sure no other activity is necessary on any workstation (do it after hours).

Purge in small increments, starting from the earliest date. For instance if you have transactions going back to January 2002, then start with a "purge before" date of March 2002 to only purge a few months, then run Purge again with a date of June 2002, then September 2002, etc. This will help minimize the amount of RAM needed each time, as well as the size of the updates sent to other workstations if you're networked.

#### Advanced notes for networking:

A long delay after each purge to synchronize the changes is normal (perhaps several minutes, depending on the network). However if it has extreme trouble sending the changes to other workstations, even when purging in very small increments, then you may need to do the following: Close down all clients, finish the purging on the Master, then manually copy the new database to each client so it doesn't have to synchronize.

You may also want to delete the log file created on the day of purging, since this can cause it to take a long time starting up ("validating" from the large log file). Look for the "PRKLOG" file in the same folder as the database, for the date of the purge. It's safe to delete the log as long as you have sufficient database backups -- the clients will automatically do a "full database refresh" since they can't synchronize from the log file, so this is also an alternative to copying the database to each client (just be sure that each client is brought up separately and given time to receive the database refresh before starting the next client).

## Keeping operators from closing the program

Here is an example of using the new Events customizations in version 4.0 to prevent non-manager operators from closing Campground Master accidentally. Of course they could always shut off the computer if they want to shut it down, but this may help avoid accidental closures due to "fumbles" with the mouse or keyboard, for instance.

1. The first step is to add an Event Action. Go to Maintenance / Advanced Customizations / Event Actions, and click "Add event action".
2. Give it a name, such as "Avoid shut-down".
3. For the Event Trigger, select "Program Shutdown".
4. We only want to prevent it for non-managers, so enter the following expression in the Condition (note that Manager access is level 4):

```
CurrentOpLevel() < 4
```

5. We want to show them that it's not allowed, and also make sure the action is aborted, so enter this in the Action expression:

```
Eval(MessageBox("You are not allowed to close this program"), .F.)
```

6. Finally, make sure the "Abort..." box is checked -- since the action expression above always returns False, the shut-down will always be aborted (assuming the Condition is met to trigger the action in the first place).

## Inventory report with total cost/value

The standard inventory reports don't show the total value of all inventory on hand, but that's easily solved by creating a simple Query (part of the new Advanced Customizations functions added in version 4.0).

1. The first step is to add a Query. Go to Maintenance / Advanced Customizations / Queries, and click "Add Query".
2. Select "List Query".
3. Give it a name, such as "Inventory total value".
4. For the Base table, select "Inventory items".
5. For the Access Level, select "Manager" (this is optional of course, but recommended).
6. Click "Quick-Add Fields", and select the basic fields you want such as Item Description, Inventory Code, Vendor, On Hand, and Cost. (To select a field just double-click on it, or else click once to select it and then click the "-->" button.). Click Done when finished adding fields.
7. Now we need to add the special column for total values. Click "Add Column", and enter this for the Expression:

```
FieldValue(This(), "Inv_Cost") * FieldValue(This(), "Inv_Qty")
```

8. Put "Total Value" in the Column Heading, and select "Currency" for the Format. Click "Save" to add the column.
9. We want to avoid a blank line between each item, so some columns need to be edited. Double-click on the item in the list that has "Item Description" as the column heading (to edit that query column), then uncheck the "Blank lines between sorted groups" box near the bottom, then Save it. Also do this for the "Item Code" column.

That's all there is to it -- you can see the results immediately by clicking "Save & Test Query results". Once you're finished and Save back to the main screen, you should see a "Query" tab view (if there wasn't one there already), just to the left of the Transactions tab on the far right. Click on the Query tab and select your new query from the drop-down list at the top to view the report any time you need to see the total inventory value.

## Adding right-click menu items for +1W and +1M

There are buttons on the Reservation Details dialog for easily adding 1 week or 1 month to the reservation, but it could be even more convenient to put these functions on the right-click menu in the Rack. This can be done by adding a Menu customization (version 4.0 required).

1. The first step is to add a custom Menu definition. Go to Maintenance / Advanced Customizations / Menus, and click "Add menu definition".
2. Enter a name, such as "+1's for Rack".
3. Select "Right-click, Reservation, on Rack" for the Base Menu.
4. To put the new selections in a suitable place, enter 21 for the Insert position
5. Click "Add menu item", and leave the default selections "Execute Action" and "Enter as static text".
6. Select "Reservations" for the access level (optional but recommended).
7. For the Selection name, enter "+1 Week".
8. For the Action expression, enter this expression to make the Last Night 7 days later:

```
SetFieldDate(Resv(), "Resv_Last_Date", Resv:Resv_Last_Date + 7)
```

9. Save that item, then "Add menu item" again for the next one (repeat steps 5 and 6 above).
10. Enter "+1 Month" for the selection name.

11. Enter this for the Action expression (note the use of the handy GoMonth function, since months are different lengths):

```
SetFieldDate(Resv(), "Resv_Last_Date", GoMonth(Resv:Resv_Last_Date, 1))
```

We're finished -- Save/Close all of the dialogs. Now if you right-click a reservation on the Rack you'll see these new entries.

NOTE: This simple example does not offer any confirmation prompts or check for conflicts (these things could be added but would be much more complex) -- it will immediately change the reservation date, so be sure to double-check the site availability before using it. Neither will it re-calculate the charges automatically (assuming you have that Auto-rates option enabled). This is presented as an example of modifying the menus, not necessarily as a complete new function, so use it with care.

## Adding new fields to the Customer Details dialog

Adding new customer information fields is relatively simple in version 4, through Maintenance / Data Field Definitions / Customer Fields (refer to that function's documentation). However the fields aren't much use unless you can enter data for them (and see what was entered). So the next step is to add them on the Customer Details dialog.

This example assumes that you've already added some new Customer data fields, and will show how to add them to the Customer Details dialog -- for simplicity we will make the dialog wider and use Quick-Add to put the new fields in a column along the right-hand side, but you could insert them anywhere you can find room.

1. The first step is to add a Dialog definition that's an Add-on to the Customer Details dialog. Go to Maintenance / Advanced Customizations / Dialogs, and click "Add dialog definition".

Note: Only one Add-on definition can be active for a given dialog, so if you already had such a definition then you would just add elements on to the existing one instead of creating a new one here (in which case, skip to step 3).

2. Give it a name, such as "Customer Details add-on". Then check the "Add-on" box and select "Customer Details" from the list. Also make sure the "Enabled" box is checked.

3. Enter 150 for the Width (which will add 150 pixels to the width of the dialog).

4. We want to add all of the custom fields in one step (there is room for up to 14 new fields in this example). Click "Quick-Add Fields", and enter these figures in the boxes: Starting top position:70, Labels left position:620, Entry fields left position:690, Entry field maximum length:100, Vertical spacing:25. Then click "Continue..."

Note: If you know that the screen resolution is more than 800x600, you could increase the Width figure in step 3, as well as the Entry field left position and/or the Entry field maximum length in step 4.

5. Select all of your custom fields (in the order you want them to appear) -- the easiest way is to double-click on each field in the left-hand list to add them to the right-hand list. Click "Done" when all the fields you want are added to the right-hand list.

6. We also want to move the Save and Cancel buttons, since we made the dialog larger. Start by clicking "Add Element". Select "Move Control" for the Element type, and enter these values -- Control ID: 1, Left: 720, Top: 10. Click "Save".

7. Click "Add Element" again, select "Move Control" for the Element type, and enter these values -- Control ID: 2, Left: 720, Top: 40. Click "Save".

OK, now you're ready to test it. Click "Save & Test dialog" to see what it looks like. You may need to do some editing of the labels (the Static text controls) and maybe adjust some sizes or positions, but that should be a good start.

Note that the Quick-add function did a lot of the "hard" work of entering appropriate expressions to load and save the data to the appropriate fields, etc. You can take a look at the element definitions to see how it actually does it.