

ProteanPAPER's Checkbook and General Ledger Guide

Introduction

The ProteanPAPER Checkbook and General Ledger implements a small but capable double entry accounting system. Support is provided for departments and projects enabling effective cost center and sales center analysis and reporting. The chart of accounts is hierarchical and provides for reporting at differing layers of encapsulation.

The checkbook function is supported for multiple registers. In fact, any account on the chart of accounts can be a register, if desired. Any transaction that effects multiple registers, like a loan payment for a back account transfer, automatically shows in both registers without a clearing account requirement. A provision is made for recurring transaction which simplifies data entry for these types of transaction and keeps the office up to date.

The checkbook system also allows for transactions to be entered with are “budget” transactions. These are not included in the normal reporting and only have significance to “budget” reports. Essentially, the accounting staff can play out the upcoming year by entering the larger expected transactions as budget transactions and then run the budget report to anticipate the finances of the next year.

The Check (transaction) List

This list contains the primary document of the accounting system. Every transaction belongs to a register. A register is simply an account that has been marked to contain transactions. Typically, a company has one checking account which corresponds to one registered account. Each transactions contains at least two, but possibly more, entry amounts that must balance. As transactions are entered into the list new locations for more entries are made which allows for many partially offsetting entries per account. For example, a loan payment would have an entry in the checking account which reduces it by the amount of the payment. This transaction would have offsetting account entries which increase the interest paid on the loan and which reduce the principle liability of the loan. So, in this example, the transaction has three entries which completely capture the financial significance of the loan payment.

The Recurring Transaction List

The Account List

This list is often referred to as the “chart of accounts”. Each account is given a code. The codes need to be chosen to reflect the hierarchy of a standard accounting system. For example, all

ASSET accounts may start with the number 1, all LIABILITY accounts may start with the number 2, all EQUITY accounts may start with the number 3, all COG accounts may start with the number 4, all REVENUE accounts may start with the number 5, and all EXPENSE accounts may start with the number 6. Thus the main bank account might have a code of 112 while all rent expenses may have an account code of 635. Accounts can be entered in the list which are simply labels and do not allow entry amounts to them. These pretty up the reports while still leaving the layout of the report flexible. Every account is assigned to either the balance sheet or income statement for reporting purposes. Furthermore each account is defined as either credit typical or debit typical to conform to common accounting practice. Lastly each account can be characterized as an increasing or a decreasing account. For example, a checkbook account would usually be thought of as a decreasing account because the vast majority of transactions reduce the account balance. So, to reduce the typing of a '-' sign, the account is flagged as usually decreasing and thus the - sign is implied.

These account codes can be selected from for all other ProteanPAPER financial consequence. For example, an asset account from the chart of accounts can be referenced for an inventory item and an expense account from the chart of accounts can be referenced for a non-stock item on the approved item list for purchases. When reports are generated, the system can interrogate all the other modules of the company and generate a complete report based upon the activity of the entire company, not just the accounting department. This feature is configurable as various other systems may duplicate financial data.

The Department with Project List

The Department list is a list of department groupings, with project groupings attached under them. This grouping mechanism can be referenced by the transactions. If a report is requested for a single department or project, or the report is requested with departmental sorting, you can view all business activity as small little balance sheets and income statements for each department or project.

The GL Reports

The System Parameters

Understanding the List and Field Interfaces

Throughout the ProteanPAPER system, you will be interacting with various lists of data. The same basic list maintenance methodology is used throughout the ProteanPAPER system. Any time there is a list of data items to be maintained the way in which you view, add, and edit items on that list will be similar. It makes no difference whether the list is a list of employees, transactions, inventory items, news items, work orders, or anything else. Every list contains a column trailing bar. The left hand side of this bar will have a link called "Add Blank" and the right hand side will say "End of List". If the list is empty, this bar is the only thing displayed.

If there is at least one item in the list, a column heading bar will appear followed by the list items. The column heading bar has a left hand part containing the link “Add Blank” and a right hand part which displays the names for the columns of the list.

Each displayed list item also has a left hand part which displays action links like “Edit”, “Copy”, “Print” and so on. If you want to edit the list item shown, you click on the “Edit” link. If you want to create a new item on the link but start with data similar to the list item shown click “Copy”. Depending upon your login privileges, some of these links may not be active.

If the list you are dealing with has a lot of items, the items will display by pages, where only a fixed number of items will appear on a single page. To access subsequent pages and more of the list items, the column trailer bar will have a link called “next items”. Click on this to access the next page of items. Any page that has prior pages of list items will have a bar that appears above the column header bar with a link “previous items”. Click that to access previous pages of items. In this manner, you can access all the items on the list.

Some lists will present a table of options at the top of the column headers. These options will allow you to change the way the items are sorted, displayed, or filtered. Not all lists will give you these options, but the larger lists most likely will. If you want a different list presentation, just change the parameters and click on the “Update List” button of the parameters.

When you click on “Add Blank”, “Edit”, or “Copy”, you will be sent to a page that is a collection of fields. It is in this field presentation that you actually enter and alter data for items on the list. In the case of the Employee list, you will see fields like Employee name, Address, Social Security Number, Employee number etc. At the bottom of the field presentation, you will see six action buttons. These buttons are almost always the same for all field presentations for lists. The buttons are

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- UPDATE (4) - Which submits the data displayed, saves it in the database and then redisplay the field presentation for further changes. Often update is used to gain access to additional data or options based upon the date recently entered.
- SAVE THEN LIST (5) - Which submits the data displayed, saves it in the database then returns the browser to the list of items.
- SAVE THEN COPY (6) - Which submits the data displayed, saves it in the database, then creates a new item with data taken from the submitted data. This is useful when you are entering a lot of data items into a list that are similar and differ only by the contents of a few fields.
- SAVE THEN BLANK (7) - Which submits the data displayed, saves it in the database, then creates a new item with the data fields blank. This is useful when you are entering multiple data items into a list that are not very similar.
- SAVE THEN ASK (8) - Which submits the data displayed, saves it in the database, then displays an acknowledgment of the data update followed by a list of links giving you options for what to do next.

- CANCEL (9) - Which submits the data, but does NOT save it in the database. The browser is returned to the list and none of the immediately preceding changes made in the field presentation are captured to the database.

Most browsers will allow you to hold down the <alt> key and press a number between 4 and 9 to activate the corresponding form button. This makes a nice shortcut when you are keying in data.

Fields for pages that are not part of a link still follow the basic paradigm. There are no lists or additional items, but the data can be “updated”, “saved”, or “canceled”.

Spend a few minutes interacting with some of the data functions. You will become comfortable with the interface very quickly.