

What's New

The first quarter of 2017 is behind us. The days are getting longer. Daylight Savings time is behind us, too. Spring is in the air as we watch the early bulb flowers appear in the East and Midwest, while the desert is full of yellow flowers.

At Syscon, we added a new storage array, an MSA, with amazingly fast drives and a RAID 10 configuration. The latency charts are amazingly quiet and we are very excited about what this means to our existing clients in our hosting solution, as well as the new ones.

We love taking care of your IT so you can take care of your business!

- Catherine Wendt

April 2017



This monthly publication provided courtesy of Catherine Wendt, President of Syscon Inc.

We love this stuff!

Our passion is helping businesses use technology to run their organization successfully and profitably.



Company Cell phone: personal password?

We purchased new Samsung S7 cell phones for all the techs! We'd been waiting for this model, and were anxious to upgrade our S4 phones. Everyone moved their Contact list with no issues, installed Slack, our Syscon F.I.T. System app, setup their email, and we were off and running.

Then we wanted to swap my phone (I dropped my S4 and broke the screen) for one of the S7 phones that is not assigned to anyone right now. No problem; we'll set it back to factory defaults and transfer my stuff to the new phone. Wait! We can't get into the phone to make any changes; how can that be?

After a few long calls with our cell phone provider, I finally went to the local store. I explained that it was a company phone, on our company account. I explained that we had purchased the phones on that same account, and all I wanted

to do was move what was on my broken phone, including my phone number, to the phone we bought. No problem, all they need is the password to the gmail account that was used when it was first setup. Mmmm...

So we went back to that person and asked for the password, but they didn't remember. We tried a few password suggestions but could not get into the gmail account that was originally used. I explained this to the provider, and they said this was a new security feature. They cannot get into the phone, and neither can we, without the password.

Just to clarify, because I wasn't sure I had jumped to the right conclusion, even though this is a business account, and the business bought the phones, they cannot, I cannot use this phone, ever, until/ unless we have the gmail account

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password; I can't swap numbers, re-assign the phone, nothing. Yes, he confirmed, I had the right conclusion.

I have to say I couldn't believe my ears. The security feature they're referring to is so that if the phone is lost or stolen, whoever 'finds' it cannot just clear it out and start using it. It also turns out that the recent iPhone models have a similar feature, tying the phone to a specific email account.

Of course, we didn't need this security feature because we use a Mobile Device Management agent for our cell phones. Also, when we distributed these phones, we were not aware of this new feature, so no thought was given to the implications of the gmail account setup.

Fool me once, that's on you. Fool me twice, that's on me!

So we have a new policy for our company cell phones:

- We will provide a generic gmail account and password to whoever will be using the phone, for the setup.
- The gmail account and password will be kept in their personnel file.
- Should their employment end, we'll need confirmed access, not only to the cell phone (which we already check for), but to the gmail account, too, before distributing the last check.

“Finding out that a new feature renders the device useless is frustrating.”

What about the phones already in use? We're going back to our staff and asking for the password associated with the gmail account on their cell phone, or if it is a personal account, that they change the gmail account on the phone, using the account and password we provide. Either way, the details will be in their employee file.

Considering how much money we spend on cell phones, not to mention monthly usage fees, finding out that a new feature by the vendor renders the device useless

without specific information, is very frustrating.

Share this with whoever in your office tracks the company cell phones and find out where you are with this. Check out our next article on the pro's and con's of Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)!

Cathy and Larry Sightings

Catherine presented a webinar, hosted by the Mason Contractors Association (MCAA), on Use Tax Accrual and Job Costing.

Larry had a very interesting tour through a Colorado cattle processing operation as part of a software demo.

'Before you marry a person, you should first make them use a computer with slow internet service to see who they really are' - Will Ferrell

Death by Meeting by Patrick Lencioni – Recommend!

Last year, our techs read *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, by Patrick Lencioni. The setting is a fable surrounding a tech company; we just couldn't stop talking about it!

As a follow up, I recently read *Death by Meeting*, also by Lencioni. It follows the same format, opening with a fable surrounding a company that creates golf games. It's a fun, fast read, then takes you right to the meat of the message. Are your company meetings a **dreaded event**? Do you struggle to **get value** out of these meetings? Or have you **ditched meetings** all together?

You've got to **check out this book**. If you'd like to share your thoughts after reading it, I'd love to hear them!



Construction Corner

Shiny New Gadget Of The Month:



Thought Oculus Was King? Think Again

Once upon a time, Oculus Rift ruled the world...

The virtual reality (VR) world, anyway. Not so much anymore. Now that VR heavyweights Sony, HTC, and Samsung have entered the ring, there's a whole new reality in, well...VR.

Sony's PlayStation VR was recently crowned "Editor's Choice" by PC Mag. And, if you happen to own a compatible Samsung Galaxy smartphone, such as the S7 or S7 Edge, you can get "untethered" VR for just \$100. You'll pay four times that for the Rift, HTC's Vive, or Sony's PlayStation VR – all tethered sets, requiring a clunky cable from headset to hardware.

Vive has the most advanced technology, but Rift is nearly as sophisticated and sells for \$200 less. You could shell out that much for the Rift's hand controllers, but, according to PC Mag, they're well worth it. So while Oculus may not be king, it's still a serious contender.

Upgrading to S100C v20

We had a recent demonstration of our Field Integrated Time System (F.I.T System, for short). We were excited to have two of our long-time friends from Sage in attendance.

There was some discussion about how soon our Sage 100 Contractor clients will have to move to version 20, the big release that introduces a SQL backend. They shared with us that Sage does not plan to release 2018 Payroll Tax updates for version 19, thereby 'encouraging' all users to move to the new version 20 release.

So, it's time to get serious about logging your various reports and queries, and checking with your third-party software vendors. This is not a typical upgrade—it is a separate program with a separate installation, additional configuration, and a testing process before making the final change. There's a significant IT component, as well.

If you haven't already done so, check out our Town Hall Panel Discussion where we cover the IT side, Programming, Reports, and the Bookkeeper's work flow. We also have several short videos, and several information blogs.

Bank Reconciliations

Several times a year, I get a call asking about the 'Account Balance' listed on the Bank Reconciliation. Usually the bookkeeper is reviewing an end-of-year or end-of-quarter with a staff person from their Accountant's office, and they think they cannot tie out this number to the General Ledger.

This is usually a short conversation—the 'Account Balance' on the Bank Reconciliation report represents the Account Balance at that moment, the amount in the Cash account, per the books, on that day and time. It is referential, in case there were fees or

missed transactions found during the reconciliation process, things that have hit the bank but are not yet booked. It's just meant to let you know what funds are on hand in case you have to draw on a line of credit. This is a statement reconciliation by date, not Posting Period.

Posting Periods versus Dates

Another common Question: If the invoice is dated March 1st, but the Posting Period is February (Period 2) because it was for February work, where does the Income show up on my Income Statement?

Answer: February, Period 2—one of the great benefits of an Accrual Accounting software package such as Sage 100 Contractor is that you can use the actual date even though the work or services are posted to a different Posting Period. Our VISA statements are dated March 1st, but all the transactions are from February, so we post it to February!

On the same topic, I am often asked what Posting Period to use when cutting a check. The invoice was posted to March but the check will be in April; post to Period 3 or Period 4?

When you enter the AP invoice, you post the expense which also adds it to your outstanding liabilities (money owed). When you cut the check, you're reducing what is owed, and taking it out of the checking account, a completely separate transaction. Use the posting period that belongs to the check date.

Reminder: All 2015 and older datasets should be archived by now.

As soon as you have 2016 wrapped up, archive that one, too. This is required before moving to S100C version 20.—
CMW



Other Stuff

Sending Secure Email

In March and early April, we are testing a secure email service. This has been activated through our long-time anti-spam partner, and we're very excited. When you send the email, you just add the word 'secure' to the subject line and the email is automatically encrypted. The recipient clicks on a link to access the email. When you respond, it remains encrypted. We'll share our findings once we're finished testing. — CMW

CIA and Samsung got a little too cozy

I'm sure you heard the recent news; all those conspiracy theorists weren't too far off. According to WikiLeaks, Samsung TV's, iPhones, and Android devices can be used by the CIA to invade our privacy. While you're thinking about it, we welcome a lot of devices into

our homes, cars, and work places that allow others to track our movements. Just think about your iPass, home security system, GPS on your phone and car, a telematics device for car insurance discounts, OnStar vehicle services, and so on. We're inviting them into our homes and lives in the name of convenience and 'saving money.' Buyer beware! - CMW



Amazon Was Down!
I'll bet some of you noticed interruptions on many of the

websites you visited when on February 28th, Amazon was down! A lot of cloud applications were impacted; couldn't log into various applications, queued up email messages, Slack was down, to name a few. Amazon Web Services is the cloud services arm of Amazon. It's Amazon Simple Storage Service (S3) is used by everyone from Netflix to Reddit. As more and more services move to the cloud, it becomes more and more likely that this will become more common.

Syscon on Twitter, Linked In

Follow us on Twitter — (Syscon_Inc) and on Linked In for updated info, articles, and videos.

Cassette audio tapes (remember those?) are making a comeback.

Compact disk sales are declining, yet vinyl records have enjoyed a resurgence over the past several years. And last year, cassette sales rose to 129,000 units, an increase of 74% over 2015. So what's up with cassettes – why so popular all of a sudden? Actually, the numbers are still miniscule compared to the 105 million CDs sold in 2016. Yet the bump in cassette sales reflects a growing appetite for tangible items that fans can cherish. Also, it doesn't hurt that artists like Justin Bieber, Eminem and Prince brought tape reissues to market. Or that online retailer Urban Outfitters has exclusive deals to sell their cassettes, as well as vintage gear to play them on. *TheVerge.com, 01.23.17*

Who Else Wants To Win a \$25 Amazon Gift Card?

This month's trivia question:

Roughly what percentage of the world's money exists only in computers?

a) 10% b) 27% c) 62% d) 95%

To enter: Go to www.Syscon-inc.com/Trivia and type in your answer. All correct answers will be put into a fishbowl and we'll randomly draw the winner. The Winner will be contacted shortly after the deadline and will be announced in next month's newsletter.

Deadline: April 20, 2017

Congratulations to last month's Trivia Contest winner, **Dottie Lewis**, with

Landscape Collaborative in MA! Dottie's name was drawn

from the fishbowl for last month's correctly answered question:

Daylight Savings Time was originally dreamed up by whom, and why?:

a) Benjamin Franklin, as a joke