

using adminsoft accounts

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Written by **Michael Towle**



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CONTENTS

1	Introduction	5
2	Installation	7
3	Setting Up (USA)	21
4	Setting Up (UK)	33
5	Getting Started (USA)	45
6	Getting Started (UK)	61
7	Sales Tax and VAT	75
8	Value Added Tax (UK)	87
9	Sales and Purchase Discounts	121
10	Inventory (Stock Control)	131
11	Purchase Order Processing	159
12	A/c Payable Ledger / Purchase Ledger	175
13	General Ledger / Nominal Ledger	185
14	Sales Prospecting	223
15	Sales Order Processing	243
16	Handling Multicurrency	257
17	Editing Document Layouts	271
18	Handling Images	289
19	Construction Industry Scheme (UK)	303
20	Payroll and RTI (UK)	323
21	Payroll	347
22	Employee Vehicles	365
23	AutoManager Module	369
24	Shop / Café Manager Module	395
25	Email shots	407
26	Tips, Hints and Troubleshooting	419
27	Security	439
	Index	447

using adminsoft accounts

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1

INTRODUCTION

My name is Michael Towle, and I'm the sole developer of Adminsoft Accounts. A feature rich accounting system for small businesses and other organizations. Unlike many so called 'free' accounting software packages, which have limited functionality or can only be used for a certain period of time, this is one of the few accounting systems that really can be used for free. It has a wide range of features, and it won't 'time out'. Work started on the project in June 2003, the first beta version was in use by May 2004, the first outside release ran at a test site in September 2005, and the first version available for download over the internet became available in December 2006 (v3.062). The project has taken many thousands of hours of work. That work is still continuing, as the software is frequently expanded and improved, with extra functions added and changes made to make it ever more powerful and easier to use.

So, how did Adminsoft Accounts come about? Well, if you're interested, and have a little time, here's my brief story.....

I started computer programming in school way back in 1975. At that time, it was a teletype terminal connected to a DEC mini-computer sited several miles away at a local polytechnic (what is now Nottingham Trent University). The programming language was BASIC, and it sure was VERY BASIC. It was interesting, but very limited. In 1979 I took a temporary job as a VDU operator, working on a Borroughs B800. This system used proper CRT computer terminals, and could be programmed in Cobol. It was a real business tool, and sparked my interest in computing as a career. The job was only supposed to last two weeks, I ended up staying over two years, and only left in order to take a City & Guilds college course in Computer Programming.

While in college, I used C/PM and developed in BASIC, Cobol, and both MOS Technology 6502 and Zilog Z80 assembler. At home I developed software on a BBC Microcomputer Model B (a 6502 driven microcomputer with 32K RAM, probably only available in the United Kingdom). On leaving college in 1983 I went to work for a big corporation (East Midlands Electricity Board) as a junior programmer. They operated two large IBM mainframes, a 3081 and 3083B. Software development was in Cobol and RPG. While working there, in my spare time I started up my own business developing software for small businesses. In 1984 I left regular employment for good, and ran the business full time. The business was initially called ACK Data, but a few years later the name was changed to System Data (neither of them were very good names, but I was still very new to the world of business).

From 1984 onwards, I developed software for a large range of computers and applications. All microcomputers, running C/PM, M/PM, MS-DOS, later using Novell Netware where there was a multi-user requirement. Programming languages ranged from various assembler languages, various dialects of BASIC and C, plus RM Cobol, dBase II, dBase III, dBase IV, Clipper, FoxPro, and Pascal. Applications could be anything from invoicing, stock control, payroll, through to software written in assembler to control juke boxes and games machines.

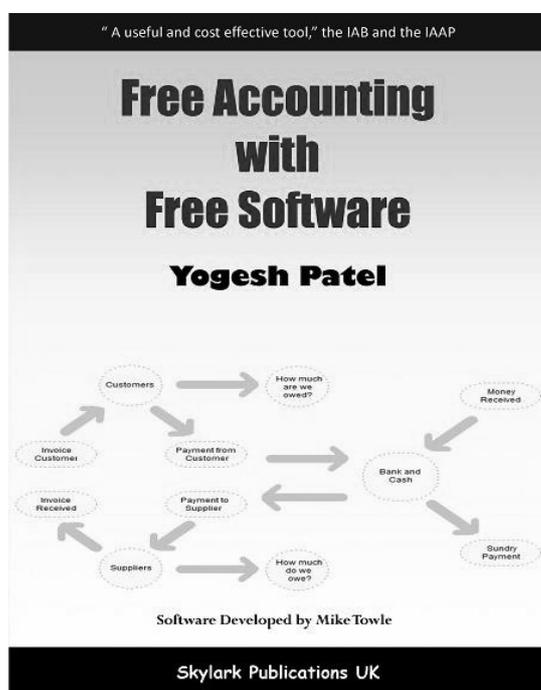
From 1995 with the introduction of Microsoft Windows 95, the world started to change. I initially developed Windows applications using Borlands Visual dBase, but moved over to Microsoft's Visual FoxPro by the late 1990s.

In 1996 while continuing to run System Data, I started another company called Media Hut, to explore opportunities in the multimedia market. Media Hut specialised in CD and DVD replication and multimedia development for electronic catalogues and corporate presentations. Of course, times change, and the market for CD/DVD replication quickly started to dwindle in the early 2000's. But as part of this work, Media Hut often found itself mailing out discs on behalf of customers, from there it developed a considerable amount of direct mail business. It also ventured out into sales of sustainable promotional merchandise, which despite a revival in sales of vinyl discs, has now overtaken the replication business by a considerable margin. This is a successful, well established company, you can find them at mediahut.co.uk

using adminsoft accounts

In the meantime, while building up Media Hut, System data continued to function. It was however in a slow decline due to a little neglect! In 2003 it lost its biggest customer due to a takeover, and so I decided that I should put all my years of business applications experience to good use by developing a small business accounts system that would be comprehensive and above all, easy to use. The accounts system I decided, would be aimed at as broad a market as possible, in order to keep the purchase price right down, indeed the price starts at \$0.00 for the freeware product. Instead of being used on one or two sites, and costing large amounts of money, this package would be used by thousands of companies/organizations in many different countries, for little or no money at all. Certainly, the software does now have thousands of users right across the world, including USA, Canada, Republic of Ireland, United Kingdom, Netherlands, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, India, Pakistan, China, and over 100 other countries. As people become increasingly anxious about trusting their valuable accounting data to the cloud, the list of Adminsoft Accounts users continues to grow.

This book explains how to use Adminsoft Accounts. It's not an introduction to bookkeeping or accounting, it assumes you know how to use a General Ledger/Nominal Ledger, or at least are aware of what it is and how it works. Although there is a brief introduction to accounting principles in the General Ledger/Nominal Ledger chapter. But if you're new to bookkeeping, or your experience is a little rusty, you may want to consider the book **Free Accounting with Free Software**. Written by Yogesh Patel, this is a great introduction to bookkeeping based on using Adminsoft Accounts.



It includes a step by step guide to help you organize your accounts.

Contents include:

- Accounting Theory
- Setup
- Customers
- Suppliers
- Expenses
- Assets & Liabilities
- Owner's Equity or Capital
- Bank
- Opening Balances
- Reports
- Other features
- Data and Backups

The book is available from Amazon. More detail and some extracts from the book can be found at: adminsoftware.biz

The user guide you are reading now, is long, and goes into great detail on some of the commonly used options. But it is far from comprehensive. There are a LOT of options and features in the software that are not covered by this book. For which I apologize. But the software is so vast, a comprehensive book would run to thousands of pages. Which unfortunately just isn't practical. Already, in order to keep the number of pages down, I'm using a smaller font that I'd like (11 point), and fairly thin margins.

One complicating aspect of producing an accounting system that can be used worldwide is terminology. Although Adminsoft Accounts is available in English only, English varies from country to country. So, with the odd exception for certain words, Adminsoft Accounts runs in one of two modes when it comes to language: American English and British English. The mode is selected automatically and depends on the country of the selected company/organization. As a result, a couple of chapters are doubled up. The contents are similar, but the terminology is a little different. They are the chapters on Getting Started and Setting Up. As they basically introduce users to Adminsoft Accounts, I considered that users had enough to think about at that point, without having to deal with terminology they may not be familiar with. The other chapters mix the two. So, for example, when referring to A/c Payable, you'll often see something like A/c Payable (Purchase Ledger), showing the British terminology in brackets, or vice-versa.

At the time of writing this (1st edition Sept. 2021), Adminsoft Accounts has taken nearly eighteen years to develop, and is the sum of forty years business software experience. I sincerely hope that it works well for you, and that you enjoy using it.

2

INSTALLATION

The software will run on just about any PC that runs Windows, from Windows 98 through to Windows 11. It will also run on Apple Mac, Linux and Solaris, using Windows emulation software. Although the software makes use of the internet, it is PC based, the program and all data are stored on your PC hard drive. There is no cloud version of this software, neither is there a version that will run as an app on your phone.

DOWNLOADING

We always recommend you download Adminsoft Accounts from our web site: adminsoftware.biz That way, we know the file you have just downloaded is clean, and *only* contains Adminsoft Accounts. If you download it from other sites, it's unlikely to contain any viruses or malware, but it may contain some pop up advertising, and/or some other products (browser add-on's are common) that will get installed along with Adminsoft Accounts.

The downloaded file will be named something like: AdminsoftAccounts4248.exe The number at the end, 4248 in this case, refers to the version number. Here it's v4.248 The file is digitally signed using the SHA-256 algorithm, as stipulated by Microsoft. However, sometimes Windows does not understand the digital signature, and may report the file as being corrupt, or not a valid exe file. If this happens, and your PC refuses to save or run the downloaded file, you can download a ZIP version of it (this is available from the same download page as the exe file). If are using Windows XP SP1, or an earlier version of Windows, you may not be able to download the exe file, as it won't recognise the digital signature, so will have to download the ZIP file. Windows XP SP2 onwards should be fine. It's now a very old version of Windows, so this unlikely to be an issue.

If you intend to run the software over a network, we suggest you skip to the networking section at the end, and have a read of that before installing the software.

If you are in a country in which English is not the first language, please make sure your Windows has the language set "English (US) for none Unicode applications" loaded. If this language set is not available, the software may not run.

DOWNLOADING AND RUNNING THE EXE FILE

Click the '**DOWNLOAD**' link to download the file. Your browser may ask what you want to do with it, select 'Save File'. Sometimes, a Google advert may appear before the download starts. It will be downloaded into your Windows 'downloads' folder. It's advisable at this point to *temporarily* turn off or disable your anti-virus software. As most anti-virus software products have a habit of stopping files from being written, or deleting files that have been created/copied, without asking the user or even displaying a message to warn the user. To run the downloaded exe file, you can click on it in your browser, but the safest way is to go into your 'downloads' folder and do a single right click on the file, then select '**Run as administrator**'.

The exe file is a compressed file that contains lots of other files. So, its first job is to unpack and uncompress all those files into a temporary folder, that may take 5 to 10 seconds. When it's done that, it runs the installation program. Skip to '**The installation program**' below.

DOWNLOADING AND INSTALLING THE ZIP FILE

If you need to download the ZIP version, the link (cunningly called 'ZIP version' in the web page) is about half way down the download page on the web site. Clicking the link will immediately start the download (your browser may ask what you want to do with it, select 'Save File'). Sometimes, a Google advert may appear before the download. The file AdminsoftAccounts4248.zip (or similar) will be stored in your Windows downloads folder. After downloading the ZIP file, create a temporary folder, and extract the contents of the ZIP file into a it. It's advisable at this point to *temporarily* turn off or disable your anti-virus software. As most anti-virus software products have a habit of stopping files from being written, or deleting files that have been created/copied, without asking the user or even displaying a message to warn the user. In the temporary folder, you'll see a program called admnstup.exe. Single right click on that and select '**Run as administrator**'. This starts up the installation program.

THE INSTALLATION PROGRAM

When the installation program starts up, if you have never installed Adminsoft Accounts on your PC before, it will look similar to this:



By default, it will install into a folder called 'Adminsoft Accounts' in the root folder of your hard drive (that is C:\Adminsoft Accounts). It's usually best to allow it to do this. Although Windows security on some PCs may not allow this. If you want to install into a different location, type in the new location, or click on the '**Browse**' button. You can install the software pretty much anywhere, **but we strongly recommend you do not install it into the 'Program Files' folder**. This folder is for programs *only*, whereas Adminsoft Accounts stores the program and data in the same folder (the data goes into sub-folders). In older versions of Windows this wasn't an issue, but later versions (from about Windows Vista onwards) are stricter, and depending on your Windows setup may prevent Adminsoft Accounts from running. The installation program will automatically create the folder 'Adminsoft Accounts', you just need to accept it being created off your root folder (which is C:\), or enter an alternative location.

PLEASE NOTE: if you decide to install the 'Adminsoft Accounts' folder into a location other than the default location, **it cannot be a NAS drive, or a folder that's automatically backed up to the cloud**. Both of these are great for storing data, but not for holding the live data for applications like accounting systems, as they can sometimes corrupt the data due to the way these kind of applications work. NAS drives and folders backed up to the cloud are fine locations for backing up your data to.

'**Put a shortcut onto your desktop**' allows the installation program to create a shortcut to Adminsoft Accounts on

using adminsoft accounts

your Windows desktop. By default, this option will normally already be selected.

'**Create option in your Windows Start menu**' is fairly self explanatory. Again, normally this option is already selected.

'**Run Adminsoft Accounts after installation**' means it will run the accounts system as soon as you exit the installation program. If you do not want to run the accounts system at this time, then click on this option to unselect it.

'**Backup existing software and data before update**', if this is a new install of Adminsoft Accounts, you can ignore this option. If you're just updating the software, this option will already be selected. If selected, it will copy the entire contents of the folder 'Adminsoft Accounts' and all sub-folders, which includes all your data. This copy goes in a folder created in: C:\ProgramData\Adminsoft The folder that's created will contain the current version number of your software along with the date and time of the backup. NOTE: if you have selected an alternative location for your data (ie. it doesn't live in a folder in the Adminsoft Accounts folder) then it will not get backed up.

Note: you are unable to see the 'ProgramData' folder, you need to change the settings in your Windows Explorer to show 'Hidden files, folders, and drives'. The folder 'ProgramData' is created by Windows during installation, and is used by lots of applications.

The '**Help**' button will display another window containing some brief helpful information. This window can stay open throughout the installation process. So, you can keep referencing it if you wish. This help window also contains a '**Copy to Clipboard**' button that will paste a copy of the help text onto your Windows clipboard, that can be pasted into another application, such as Notepad, Microsoft Word, etc.

The '**Install Guide**' will display a copy of this PDF guide. So, if you're reading this, you don't need to click this button!

The '**Cancel**' button will do exactly that. It will exit the installation program without installing Adminsoft Accounts.

When you're ready to install, click the '**Install**' button. Installation is pretty quick, and normally only takes between 5 and 15 seconds. You will see a new window open up very briefly, probably a couple of times. This is normal. When the install is complete, the installation program will tell you it's done. If there are any issues, it will tell you. If there are issues, you may need to email technical support: support@adminsoftware.biz

So, when installation is complete, the program will now look something like the following screen image:



using adminsoft accounts

Before going any further, now is a good time to remember to **enable your anti-virus** software again!

Important: Before running Adminsoft Accounts for the first time, In your anti-virus software, register the folder 'Adminsoft Accounts' as a known trusted/safe/exempt folder. The actual terminology differs between anti-virus products. If your firewall is separate from your anti-virus software, you will need to register the folder in there also. If it's not possible to register the folder, then register the programs accounts.exe and emailing.exe that live in the 'Adminsoft Accounts' folder. If you have to register the exe files, whenever you update Adminsoft Accounts, you will need to re-register accounts.exe and emailing.exe, as the contents of the files will have changed. Your anti-virus software will detect the change, and may not allow the updated software to run, or may prevent it from running properly. But if you are able to register the folder (which you can in most anti-virus products), this may not be necessary.

When you click the **'Done'** button in the installation software, if you left the option **'Run Adminsoft Accounts after installation'** selected, the installation program will close down and then start up Adminsoft Accounts. It may take a few seconds before you see the accounting system start up.

If Adminsoft Accounts doesn't start up, or starts up and displays error messages, you may need to remove it and try to install it again. To remove it, delete the folder 'Adminsoft Accounts', and also delete the folder 'Adminsoft' in your 'C:\ProgramData' folder. Before trying to install again, please read through this installation guide again, and make sure you follow all advice given. Usually if an install fails, the most likely cause is anti-virus software messing things up. Next likely cause is Windows user access rights, it may be necessary to login as Administrator, or at least right click on the downloaded program and select the **'Run as administrator'** option. Other possible issues can be the language (English (US) none Unicode character set is required), or a Windows compatibility issue (if this is suspected, set compatibility mode to Windows Vista, to do this right click on the exe file and select **'Properties'**, then click on the **'Compatibility'** tab).

RUNNING ADMINSOFT ACCOUNTS FOR THE FIRST TIME

When run for the first time, the accounts system will ask you to register. The window looks like this:

Welcome to Adminsoft Accounts. Please enter your organization details here to register.

Your installation and use of this software is subject to our terms and conditions. Please take the time to click the button on the right and read them. They have been kept as short and to the point as possible. No reams of small print here!

This software is free to use, with no time out.

You are welcome to copy this software, and distribute as many of those copies as you wish. In fact, we encourage you to do so! Lets face it, we want as many people using this software as possible.

The 'OK' button will only be enabled to allow you to continue with the program, once all the required information has been entered and appears valid.

Your Name

Company/Organization

Full Address

Country

Email Address

You will be emailed a special offer as soon as you register! We may then email you occasionally, and we do mean occasionally, usually no more than once a month, but you will be able to unsubscribe at any time.
Click on the 'OK' button only if you agree to our terms & conditions.

Terms & Conditions

Help

Installation Guide

Cancel

OK

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The **'OK'** button will remain greyed out until all the input fields with a light red background have been filled in.

using adminsoft accounts

The software will try and obtain what country you're in from your Windows settings, and then display it in the 'Country' input field. If it's not correct, click the small down arrow head to the right to drop down a list of countries, and then select one. If your country is not in the list, click the 'Add New' button.

It's important you enter a valid email address. After registration an introductory email will be sent to you. Sometimes this contains a special offer. We very rarely send out email shots, so you won't receive any spam from us.

The next screen image shows a completed registration form:

Welcome to Adminsoft Accounts. Please enter your organization details here to register.

Your installation and use of this software is subject to our terms and conditions. Please take the time to click the button on the right and read them. They have been kept as short and to the point as possible. No reams of small print here!

This software is free to use, with no time out.

You are welcome to copy this software, and distribute as many of those copies as you wish. In fact, we encourage you to do so! Lets face it, we want as many people using this software as possible.

The 'OK' button will only be enabled to allow you to continue with the program, once all the required information has been entered and appears valid.

Your Name	Mike Towle
Company/Organization	Adminsoft Ltd.
Full Address	123 Small Street Little Town Big City BC1 2CB
Country	United Kingdom <input type="button" value="Add New"/>
Email Address	mike@mikesemail.com

You will be emailed a special offer as soon as you register! We may then email you occasionally, and we do mean occasionally, usually no more than once a month, but you will be able to unsubscribe at any time.
Click on the 'OK' button only if you agree to our terms & conditions.

adminsoft

Click on the 'Terms & Conditions' button to read the contract between us. Basically, it says we're responsible for pretty much nothing, and the onus on the software working correctly is entirely on you! But we recommend you read it anyway, just so you know. We've kept it as short and simple as possible.

The 'Help' button displays some brief information to help you complete this form, if necessary. The information is displayed on top of the form though, it's not in a separate window, so needs to be closed before you can continue with the registration.

The 'Installation Guide' displays this guide in PDF format. Perhaps you're reading this because you clicked that button? Regardless, now you are reading this, you can ignore this button.

The 'Cancel' button will cancel the setup and exit Adminsoft Accounts. If you start up Adminsoft Accounts again, it will go straight into this setup screen. You can't use the accounting system until this information has been provided.

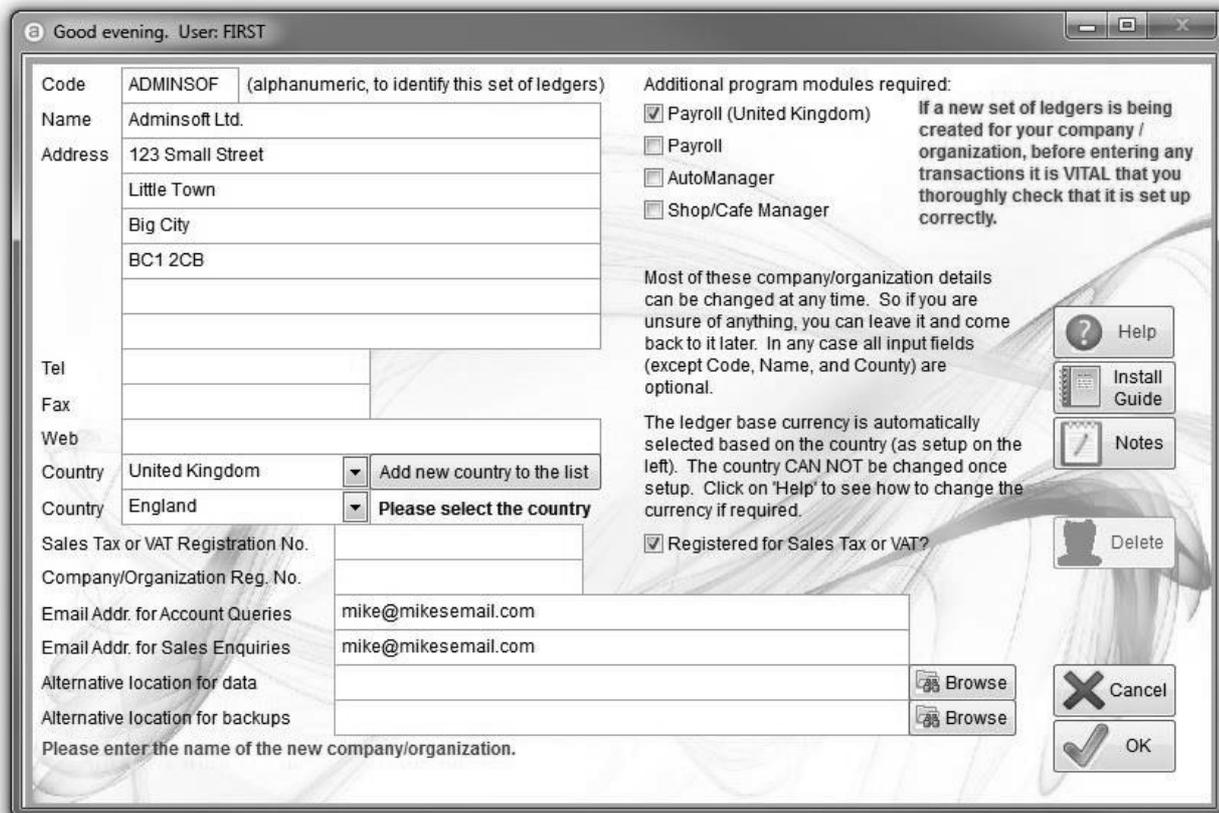
When you click the 'OK' button, Adminsoft Accounts will register your software over the internet. If your firewall displays a message asking you if you want to allow the application to send data over the internet, please allow it to do so. A web page thanking you for registering will appear in your default browser.

Next, the following message will appear, see next screen image:

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The accounts system can handle the accounts for almost as many companies/organizations as you wish. Most users only require one, although it can be useful to setup two: one containing your live data, and the other to use for trying things out when you're unsure what to do. You'll need to enter some basic information such as name and address, email address, etc. Though most of this it will have copied from your registration form (during the installation stage, but any subsequent companies/organizations created will start off with a blank form). Below is the form for creating a new company/organization, using details we entered during installation:



Code	ADMINSOF (alphanumeric, to identify this set of ledgers)	Additional program modules required:	If a new set of ledgers is being created for your company / organization, before entering any transactions it is VITAL that you thoroughly check that it is set up correctly.
Name	Adminsoft Ltd.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Payroll (United Kingdom)	
Address	123 Small Street Little Town Big City BC1 2CB	<input type="checkbox"/> Payroll	Most of these company/organization details can be changed at any time. So if you are unsure of anything, you can leave it and come back to it later. In any case all input fields (except Code, Name, and County) are optional. The ledger base currency is automatically selected based on the country (as setup on the left). The country CAN NOT be changed once setup. Click on 'Help' to see how to change the currency if required.
Tel		<input type="checkbox"/> AutoManager	
Fax		<input type="checkbox"/> Shop/Cafe Manager	
Web			
Country	United Kingdom <input type="button" value="Add new country to the list"/>		
Country	England <input type="button" value="Please select the country"/>		
Sales Tax or VAT Registration No.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Registered for Sales Tax or VAT?	
Company/Organization Reg. No.			
Email Addr. for Account Queries	mike@mikesemail.com		
Email Addr. for Sales Enquiries	mike@mikesemail.com		
Alternative location for data	<input type="button" value="Browse"/>	<input type="button" value="Delete"/>	
Alternative location for backups	<input type="button" value="Browse"/>	<input type="button" value="Cancel"/>	
Please enter the name of the new company/organization.		<input type="button" value="OK"/>	

By the way, if you were running Adminsoft Accounts before, and are now installing it on a different PC, you still need to create a new company/organization, in order to create a set of ledgers you can then restore your data into. You don't need to enter any data, as the files created will be overwritten when you restore your backup.

using adminsoft accounts

Anyway, back to the regular installation process. The first bit of information it asks for is the '**Code**'. When it creates the set of ledgers, it will use this code to name the folder that will contain all your data. So, it's important it's unique. As you're not likely to set up many companies/organizations, this shouldn't be an issue.

The first time you create a company/organization, this code will be created for you, although you can edit it. If your company was called Adminsoft, for example, you could enter 'ADMINSOF' as the code. The code can be anything you like, up to eight characters (letters and/or numbers can be used). Also, you don't need to remember it. It's simply to give each company/organization (ie. a set of ledgers) a unique reference.

Most of the information in this screen can be changed at a later date. But the input fields '**Code**' and '**Country**' cannot. Entering the right country is important, because the currency used in the accounts system is dependent on the country, as is the terminology. For example, 'A/c. Receivable' in the USA is usually called 'Sales Ledger' in the UK.

If you are registered for Sales Tax or VAT, make sure the '**Registered for Sales Tax or VAT?**' box is ticked (it's ticked by default). Although the software will set up Sales Tax/VAT tables for some countries, it may not do so for your country, and if it does set up a table, it may not be up to date, so you will need to check the tax codes and rates setup before entering any invoices. This is discussed in more detail in the 'Setup' guide.

The accounts software comes with five additional modules. The first in the list is '**Payroll (United Kingdom)**'. This was designed specifically for use in the United Kingdom (even then, it's about as basic as a payroll can get. But unlike HMRC's on-line facility, it has no limit on the number of employees). It may work in other countries, but the payroll handles the data in a way that is specific to the United Kingdom tax rules, which complicates things a little. The next module is '**Payroll**', this is designed to operate in other countries. Depending on how sophisticated the requirements are. So, there are no guarantees it will be useable in your country. If you want to use payroll, and are not based in the United Kingdom, select this one. There is a user guide specifically for setting up and running payroll. The other module is '**AutoManager**', this is designed specifically for those business operating auto parts retail, and/or workshop. It can handle point of sale, including bar code scanners, cash drawers, and receipt printers. It also allows the booking in of vehicles (or other types of equipment), booking out parts to jobs, allocation of labour, etc. It maybe it's useful in other similar environments. Such as plant equipment, caravans, RVs, etc. The fourth module is '**Shop/Cafe Manager**'. This is designed for general retail (again it allows the use of bar code scanners, cash drawers, and receipt printers), it also handles cafe/restaurants by allowing tabs to be monitored for each table, orders to be sent to the kitchen (via a separate printer), and so on. The fifth is '**Sales Prospecting and Sales Order Processing**'. This is actually two modules kind of rolled into one. The first section allows you to record the details of sales prospects, add reminders, diary entries, create and print out estimates, and send email shots. The second section allows you to create sales orders, and from those generate purchase orders, delivery notes, proforma invoices and sales invoices. It also has options which allow you to easily monitor orders/job in progress. The '**Sales Prospecting and Sales Order Processing**' is not visible in the last screen image, and is not available when the software is running as Freeware. User guides are available for all of these modules.

When creating a new company/organization, and it's not the first one created, you'll see a '**Copy From**' button. This allows you to copy ALL data from another company/organization. You can also copy data from one company/organization to another by simply backing up the data in one, and then restoring it into the other, using the 'Backup Data' and 'Restore Data' options in the Adminsoft Accounts start up window.

'**Alternative location for data**' allows you to store your data somewhere other than the default location. In our example above, if the '**Code**' you entered for your company/organization was 'ADMINSOF', then the data would be stored in:

Adminsoft Accounts\ledgers\ADMINSOF

But this input field allows you to store it somewhere else, either on your hard disk, a network disk, or even on a memory stick. But, if you start up the accounts system, and try to access your accounts and the data location is not available, you will get error messages! So, beware if using this facility on a network.

Most users can ignore this option, and use their data in its default location.

WARNING: Do not store your data on a shared backup device such as a NAS drive, or into a folder that is automatically backed up to the cloud. Both these, for different reasons, can corrupt your data. Many suppliers sell backup drives for networks saying they are suitable for file sharing, which they kind of are, provided only one user

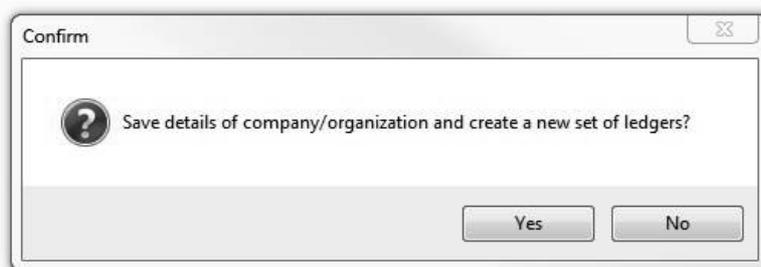
using adminsoft accounts

accesses the file at a time. They do not usually support record locking or proper buffering. The problem with folders that are backed up to the cloud, is that when a file is being backed up, it cannot be opened by the accounts system. So, if the accounts system needs to use the file, and it's not available, it will fail to record or update data and/or index records.

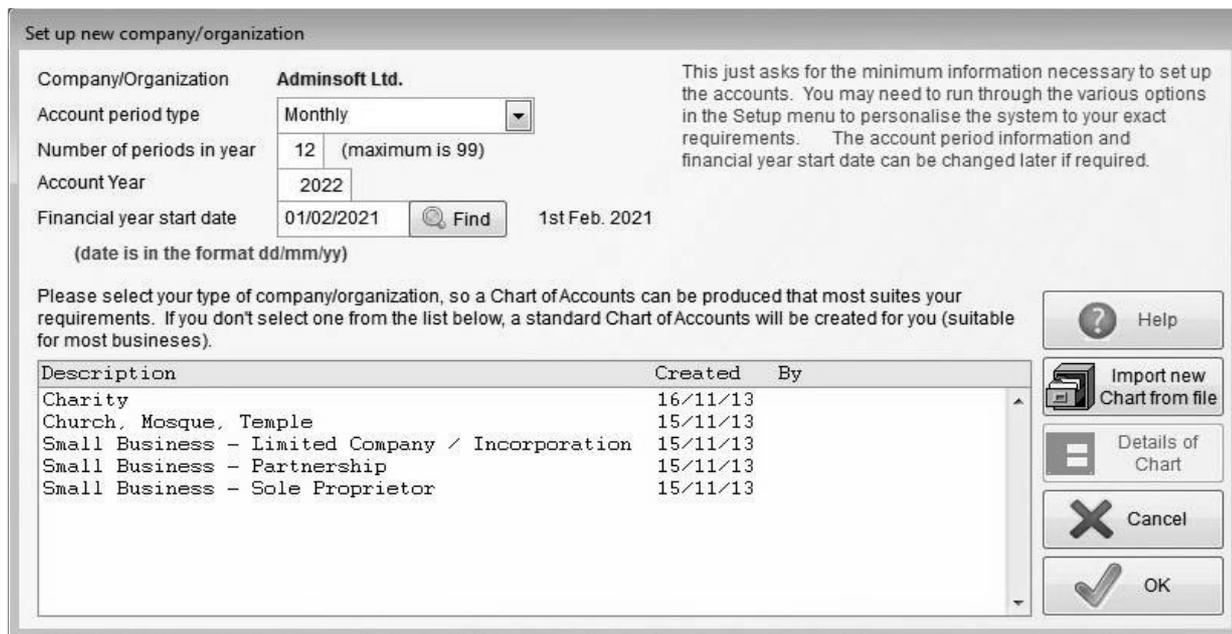
If you need to share data over a network, the data *must* be sat on a hard drive in a Windows PC, or better still on the hard drive in a Windows file server.

'**Alternative location for backups**'. When backing up, there is an option for a quick backup to hard disk. Not ideal, because if your hard disk fails, or is stolen, you still lose your data. But if you're in a hurry, it's better than nothing (we always recommend backing up to a memory stick, preferably several used in rotation). If you have a folder that is automatically backed up to the cloud or a NAS drive, you can't store the accounts data directly into it (see warning above), but you can backup your data to it (cloud backups are very useful for that). Hence this option.

Once you've filled in this form, click on the '**OK**' button. The following question will appear:



If you click '**No**', the form will vanish and dump you into the accounts system opening screen. Not a big deal, it just means you would then have to click the '**New Comp./Org.**' button and enter the details again. So please click '**Yes**'. You'll then be presented with the form below:

A screenshot of the "Set up new company/organization" form. The form contains the following fields and options:

- Company/Organization: Adminsoft Ltd.
- Account period type: Monthly (dropdown)
- Number of periods in year: 12 (maximum is 99)
- Account Year: 2022
- Financial year start date: 01/02/2021 (with a "Find" button) and 1st Feb. 2021. A note below says "(date is in the format dd/mm/yy)".

On the right side, there is explanatory text: "This just asks for the minimum information necessary to set up the accounts. You may need to run through the various options in the Setup menu to personalise the system to your exact requirements. The account period information and financial year start date can be changed later if required." Below the form fields is a table for selecting a chart of accounts type:

Description	Created	By
Charity	16/11/13	
Church, Mosque, Temple	15/11/13	
Small Business - Limited Company / Incorporation	15/11/13	
Small Business - Partnership	15/11/13	
Small Business - Sole Proprietor	15/11/13	

At the bottom right, there are buttons for "Help", "Import new Chart from file", "Details of Chart", "Cancel", and "OK".

This is the last form before all the data files are created for your company/organization. The first bit, obviously, is dealing with your financial periods and year. It makes a best guess, but of course your actual requirements may be a very different, so edit as necessary. Most account periods are monthly, but some are weekly, you even have the choice of 445 (which is the system where two periods are made up of four weeks each, then the third is five weeks, then it goes back to four weeks, and so on). The system is quite flexible. This is not set in stone. Once your company/organization has been created, you can edit the account periods and/or financial year at any time. Note: the '**Account Year**' is the year in which your account year ends.

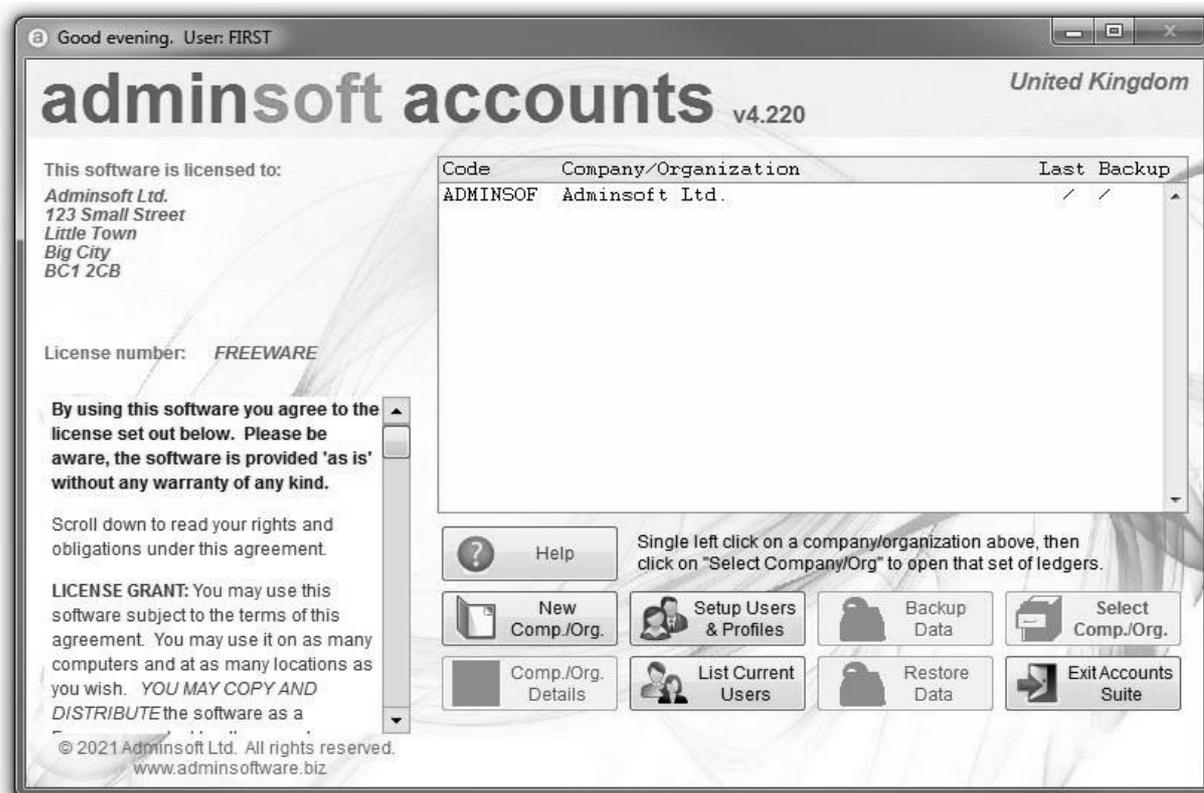
The lower half of this form deals with the chart of accounts. By default, it will use a chart of accounts suitable for small Ltd. or Inc. companies (these are companies with limited liability and made up of shares). But you can select another from the list. Once your company/organization has been created, you can edit the chart of accounts, changing account codes, deleting accounts, or creating new ones. So, you're not stuck with whatever accounts are

using adminsoft accounts

created.

'**Import new Chart from file**' allows you to load up a different chart of accounts. On our web site, there is a section where other users have uploaded a chart of accounts they have created. You may wish to peruse this section, and download to your PC a chart of accounts that you think may be more relevant to your company/organization. You can then import that chart using this option. This is perhaps an option for the more experienced user.

When you click the '**OK**' button, the system will start creating your data files. When it's finished, it will leave you in the accounts system start up form. As the next image:



As you can see, there is one company/organization in there called Adminsoft Ltd. From here you can single left click on your company/organization and then click the '**Select Comp./Org.**' button. This will take you into the accounts for that company/organization. Alternatively, you can simply double click on the company/organization. The next step is to setup your data ready for you to enter accounts and transactions, please see the User Guide on Setting Up. There is one specifically for the United Kingdom, and one for the United States (which is probably the best one to use if you are anywhere outside of the United Kingdom).

The buttons on the start up form above:

'**Help**' will display some help text describing how to use this start up form. You'll see '**Help**' buttons on most forms throughout the accounts system. One really useful feature they have, is they provide a section for you to make notes that relate to the option in use.

'**New Comp./Org.**' allows you to create a new company/organization. This works in the same way as we created the first company/organization above. Although you will have to create your own '**Code**'. It creates an entirely new set of files, so the data held for the new company/organization does not have any affect or interfere in any way with any other existing company/organizations. You can set up as many as you wish. Very useful if you look after the accounts of several companies/organizations.

'**Setup Users & Profiles**' allows you to create new users of Adminsoft Accounts, and create passwords for them if necessary. When installed, a user account is automatically set up for you, the user name is **FIRST** and there's no password. When creating new users, we recommend you keep this user name for a little while, until you are happy you can login using a different user name. **Always keep a note of any new passwords you create.**

'**List Current Users**' will display a list of all users currently accessing the accounts system, regardless of which

using adminsoft accounts

company/organization they may be working in. This of course, is only of use when running the software over a network.

'Backup Data' is very important! **We strongly recommend you use this option regularly!** You will need to click on a company/organization in order for the 'Backup Data' button to become enabled. It will then allow you to back up the data for the selected company/organization. Backing up is one of those things busy users who are pressed for time often skip. But, if something happens to your accounting data, such as a hard disk failure, lock out due to ransomware, etc. there's nothing SO valuable as a good backup! If you're in a hurry, in the Backup data option you can select '**Quick Backup to Hard Disk**' which will copy your data into a backup folder (within the 'Adminsoft Accounts' folder, unless you have specified an alternative location within the company/organization details). It's quick and easy to do, and does at least give you a backup. But of course, the backup is on your hard disk drive. So, if anything happens to your hard disk drive or your PC, you may lose that backup. It's much safer to back up onto a USB memory stick, or some other external device (even your phone, they usually have plenty of memory capacity). If you don't have the time to do this once a day, please make a point of doing it at least once a week, perhaps at the end of the week.

One really good way of securing your data is to install some software that automatically backups up a folder to the cloud. Set it to back up the folder:

C:\Adminsoft Accounts\backups

The above is assuming you installed Adminsoft Accounts into the default location. You can tell Adminsoft Accounts to backup into a different folder. In the Company/Organization window (discussed a few pages back), there is an input field '**Alternative location for backups**'. This allows you to set a different folder for backups for a particular company/organization. If you have several company/organizations they can share the same folder. NOTE: NEVER be tempted to use software that automatically backups up to the cloud to backup your live data, as it can corrupt the data files.

'Restore Data' allows you to select a backup and copy it back into the live system. As with the backup option, you will need to click on a company/organization so that it knows which set of files you need to copy the backed up data to.

'Select Comp./Org.' launches the accounting system, using the data from the selected company/organization.

'Exit Accounts Suite' will exit Adminsoft Accounts. After working on the accounts for a company/organization, you should always exit the system properly. If you end the program using Windows Task manager, or if you close down your PC with Adminsoft Accounts still running, you may corrupt your accounting data files. If you are running the software as 'Freeware' (ie. you have not purchased a Software Registration Key), then after the software closes down it will launch a web page off our web site. This page often provides information about what's happening with the software, and is worth a quick look through.

On the left hand side of this start up form you'll see a scrollable section that contains the details of the software license. Please read this carefully. It basically says the accuracy of any and all information output and contained within the accounts system is entirely **your responsibility**, and that Adminsoft Ltd. or any of its agents cannot be held responsible for any loss whatsoever, howsoever it occurred, whether notified of the potential for a loss or not. You are deemed to have accepted these terms by your continued use of the software. It might all sound a bit draconian! But the thing is, we have no idea at all what data you're going to put in the accounts system, or how you're going to use it, or what Windows you're going to run it in, or the condition of the PC that you'll be using, etc. Once our software is out there, we've really no idea what people are going to do with it. So, you can understand we can't offer any kind of guarantees at all.

ANTI-VIRUS SOFTWARE

Straight after installation and the creation of the ledgers for your company/organization, if you haven't done so already, you need to go into the setup of your anti-virus software and tell it the folder 'Adminsoft Accounts' is a safe/trusted/exempt folder (the terminology differs between different anti-virus products). Then re-enable your anti-virus software. If you cannot select a folder, then select the files accounts.exe and emailing.exe within the 'Adminsoft Accounts' folder. This is just as effective, but by only selecting the files, you will have to do this each time Adminsoft Accounts is updated, because your anti-virus software will detect the file has changed, and may not

using adminsoft accounts

be too happy about it! So, it's much better to set the folder to safe/trusted/exempt if possible.

This has already been mentioned several pages back. But anti-virus software can create some nasty problems, and so it's worth mentioning it again.

Some anti-virus products have a separate setting to allow a program to communicate with the internet (might be in the firewall section). Please make sure Adminsoft Accounts is allowed access to the internet, otherwise certain functions that display web pages or send email will not work. If you're in the United Kingdom, internet access is vital, otherwise the software will not be able to submit your VAT return, or any other information you may require to be sent to HMRC.

UPDATING ADMINISOFT ACCOUNTS

A new version of the software is released every month or so. It's strongly advised you keep your software up to date. If you're in the United Kingdom, you will have to keep the software up to date, otherwise it may fail to submit your payroll or VAT data to HMRC.

To update the software, simply download the latest version from our web site, then run it. Just as if you were installing it for the first time. Except it will recognise that you already have Adminsoft Accounts installed on your PC, and will update your existing copy. It will not disturb any of your data. But it's always good practice to backup your data before updating your software. Once every couple of weeks the software will check to see if there is a new version available, and if there is, it will give you the option of downloading it.

INSTALLING ON A NETWORK

Adminsoft Accounts is multi-user, and will happily run over a LAN (Local Area Network). The server and workstations may be connected together by cable or over a Wi-Fi. Cable is preferable, as it's a more reliable connection. Unlike your internet browser, accounting systems generally do not cope well with brief interruptions in network access.

If you intend to use the software mainly on one PC, but have a couple of workstations accessing the software occasionally, then one of the workstations can act as the server by simply sharing part of its hard drive on the network. For anything larger, a proper server running Windows Server software is recommended. Note: you cannot use a NAS drive, as pointed out previously, most are not designed for software like accounting applications and can corrupt the data.

There are two main options when it comes to installing the software on a network:

- 1) You can install the software on each workstation. Then designate one workstation (or of course the server) as the 'master'. That workstation will contain the live data. In the company/organization details of each workstation, you would have to set the input field '**Alternative location for data**' to point to the location of the data on the file server.
- 2) You can install the software on the server or a PC acting as the server, and then simply link each workstation to it. Adminsoft Accounts does not require any actual installation, in that it does not need to update the Windows registry (although it may do sometimes, but this will usually be automatic) or copy files into the Windows 'system' folder, or anything like that. The workstation simply needs to run the file accounts.exe in the 'Adminsoft Accounts' folder. A Windows menu option or desktop icon will need to be set up on each workstation to do this. This is actually the simpler option. Especially when the software needs updating, as there's only one copy of the software to worry about. The vast majority of users implement networking using this option.

See the instructions in the previous pages for installing the software. One thing to be particularly wary of, is to make the location of the accounts systems and its data the same for all users. The drive and folder names must be the same. While Adminsoft Accounts will run from anywhere, provided it has full read/write/create/delete access, as users add images and documents, some of these can use full path names. If different users have different paths to get to the application, some of this data may not be available to them.

using adminsoft accounts

There is an issue when networking, due to a suspected bug in Windows software. In order to achieve greater performance, when a PC opens a file on a shared drive, the file is locked, even though the application may have opened it in 'shared' mode. This allows for faster file access. When another PC or application attempts to open the file, the PC sharing the file releases the lock it has on the file, and allows it to be shared between two or more applications. However, sometimes this 'release' fails, the file remains locked, and other applications are denied access to it. This is the job of the network sharing protocol in Windows called SMB (Server Message Block).

It helps if the PC sharing out the files is running either the same version of Windows as the workstations, or if it's running Windows Server, then the closest possible version. It's vital the server and workstations are ALL using Windows Vista and later (up to Windows 7), or Windows 2000 and earlier. This is because all early versions of Windows use SMB1 (server message block) up to version XP. After XP up to Windows 7 (and Server 2008) they all use SMB2. From Windows 8 (and Server 2012/2016) they use SMB3. Different versions of the SMB appear not work together very well. So, if your network has a mishmash of PCs running different versions of Windows, that could spell trouble. See the table below, that hopefully makes it a little clearer as to what versions of Windows will work together:

SMB1

Windows 98
Windows 2000
Windows XP (with opportunistic locking disabled)
Windows NT

SMB2

Windows Vista
Windows 7
Windows Server 2008 and 2008 R2

SMB3

Windows 8
Windows 10
Windows Server 2012
Windows Server 2016

Try not to mix PCs/servers on a network with different versions of SMB. Also, don't run Windows 2000 or earlier as a file server (though that's pretty unlikely these days). You should also be aware there are security concerns with SMB1, and so no version of Windows that uses this should be connected to the internet.

To make matters worse, a network running Windows Server 2016 with workstations all running Windows 10 seems to be very prone to data corruption, even though they're all using SMB3. Microsoft are phasing out SMB1 due to security concerns. The problem is that many applications rely on SMB1, this includes Adminsoft Accounts (developed using Microsoft Visual FoxPro). The only solution seems to be to disable OpLocks, which also seems to mean disabling SMB2 and SMB3. **Which is not a good solution.** As from Autumn 2017, Windows isn't even shipped with SMB1 at all.

Another possible solution is to not use Windows Server at all, but use a Linux based server, such as Open Enterprise Server. But testing has shown this does not always resolve the issue. It would appear the problem is workstations not working well together, rather than a server issue.

One solution that appears to work, without compromising any other software, as far as I know, is to set the following Windows registry values in each workstation and the server:

```
[HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\services\LanmanWorkstation\Parameters]
"FileInfoCacheLifetime"=dword:00000000
"FileNotFoundCacheLifetime"=dword:00000000
"DirectoryCacheLifetime"=dword:00000000
```

Unfortunately, due to the very tight security in later versions of Windows, Adminsoft Accounts cannot do this for you. It has to be done manually.

In tests, the above has proved to be very reliable. Although nothing will be 100% reliable.

using adminsoft accounts

Due to the above Microsoft software issues, we recommend you re-index Adminsoft Accounts on a very regular basis, perhaps overnight. The software allows this to be done from the command prompt from within the 'Adminsoft Accounts' folder, as follows:

```
accounts reindex
```

This will re-index every file in the system (provided no one is logged in at the time). No login is required, and it exits as soon as it's finished. The results of the re-index are written into a text file called index.txt. The results of a re-index to each company/organization are also written into the Ledger Events diary. If you wish, you can just re-index the system files, or a particular company/organization, to find out how, enter the following into the command line:

```
accounts help
```

A great many users do successfully operate the software over a network, we do at our offices. However, do bear in mind it was developed for small businesses and organizations, and not for networks with 10 users, each user hammering in a couple of hundred transactions a day! For that kind of throughput, you would need to look at an SQL driven system, or a top end cloud based system, of course both are likely to be very expensive.

USING ADMINSOFT ACCOUNTS OVER THE INTERNET

Adminsoft Accounts is a Windows/PC based application, and so was never designed to operate over the internet. However, there are ways of doing it. Whichever method you use, will require at least one PC to be running whenever you need to access Adminsoft Accounts. There are two possible options as follows:

1 Use some software that will access your Windows PC desktop over the internet. This kind of software aims to reproduce your Windows desktop. It does this by streaming the image that would be on your monitor across the internet. No actual accounts data is sent over the internet, just images, and your keyboard activity and mouse activity. This option is commonly used to not just access Adminsoft Accounts, but lots of other Windows/PC based software. It's probably faster than using the next option (below), but the downside is you would need one PC for every person who is likely to want to connect over the internet, and each of those PCs would probably need to be running 24/7. The advantage is that probably just about any device that can access the internet could access Adminsoft Accounts. Provided it has a reasonable size screen (Adminsoft Accounts can be run on a minimum screen size of 800 x 600 pixels).

2 Use some software that will share your hard drive over the internet. While actual accounts data will be sent over the internet, it will be encrypted. This method can be slow, as it has to keep accessing accounts.exe to run various bits of the program, and accounts.exe is 70mb. If you have a lot of data, the situation is even worse. What you can do, is put a copy of accounts.exe onto the hard drive of the client PC (the one that's requesting the data), along with its support files. You can simply copy the contents of the 'Adminsoft Accounts' folder, but with none of the subfolders. When it starts up, it will then ask you to locate the folders and data. This option can run at a useable speed, provided your network access at both ends is at least 100mbs, upload and download. The advantage of this method, is that only one PC is required to host Adminsoft Accounts, and share its hard disk. That one PC can be accessed by multiple users. The disadvantage, is that to get it to run at a reasonable speed, it will need to have a copy of accounts.exe on its own hard drive, which will also need updating, whenever the main Adminsoft Accounts installation is updated. It also means access can be by another Windows PC only. It doesn't have the flexibility of option 1. There is another disadvantage, by sharing the hard disk that has Adminsoft Accounts installed on it, security may be an issue. It could become infected with a virus on the client computer. This is extremely unlikely with option 1.

AFTER INSTALLATION

There are a couple chapters in this book you may wish to look at first that provide the basics you need to get going with Adminsoft Accounts. The first one is 'Setting Up', look at this one first, and the second is 'Getting Started', look at that one next. As well as being in this book, they are both also supplied as PDF files as part of the download, and can be accessed from the 'Getting Started' window that appears when you go into the accounts systems for the first time. They are also available from the 'Help' menu (on the top menu bar), they can also be downloaded from the 'User Guide' section of our web site.

using adminsoft accounts

While the chapter on General Ledger/Nominal Ledger does quickly explain the basics of double entry accounting, and how those ledgers function, most of the book assumes the reader has some knowledge or experience of bookkeeping. If you find it a little daunting at tis time, I can recommend the book Free Accounting with Free Software by Yogesh Patel. It's available from Amazon, though there are some details on our web site, adminsoftware.biz

FOLDERS AND DATA

All the data files are held in folders within the main program folder (usually named 'Adminsoft Accounts'). As at v4.247 the structure of this folder should look something like this:

```
C:\Adminsoft Accounts\backups
C:\Adminsoft Accounts\ledgers
C:\Adminsoft Accounts\system
C:\Adminsoft Accounts\temp
C:\Adminsoft Accounts\accounts.exe
C:\Adminsoft Accounts\Chilkatmail2.dll
C:\Adminsoft Accounts\EZJpeg.dll
C:\Adminsoft Accounts\EZtwain3.dll
C:\Adminsoft Accounts\foxypreviewer.app
C:\Adminsoft Accounts\GdiPlus.dll
C:\Adminsoft Accounts\hndid.dll
C:\Adminsoft Accounts\install.log
C:\Adminsoft Accounts\md5.fl
C:\Adminsoft Accounts\msvcp71.dll
C:\Adminsoft Accounts\msvcr71.dll
C:\Adminsoft Accounts\system.app
C:\Adminsoft Accounts\VFP9R.DLL
C:\Adminsoft Accounts\VFP9RENU.DLL
C:\Adminsoft Accounts\vfpccompression.fl
C:\Adminsoft Accounts\vfpcencryption71.fl
C:\Adminsoft Accounts\xfrxlid.fl
C:\Adminsoft Accounts\zlib.dll
```

The '**backups**' folder is where backups are stored using the '**Quick Backup to Hard Disk**' option in the '**Backup Data**' option. The '**ledgers**' folder contains a folder for each company/organization created. So that each one has its own entirely separate set of ledgers and files. The '**system**' folder contains files that are shared between all companies/organizations. This includes things like Adminsoft Accounts user details, the help files, registration details, and so on. The '**temp**' folder, as the name suggests contains any files that are created temporarily. Each time Adminsoft Accounts starts up, the contents of this folder are deleted.

The Adminsoft Accounts program itself is accounts.exe This will run from anywhere. During installation, all required files are in the '**Adminsoft Accounts**' folder. It does not install anything into any of the Windows system files. It does create some entries in the Windows registry (to allow web pages to be rendered correctly within the app, for which it uses IE, and for some built in email software called Chilkat), but each time Adminsoft Accounts is run, this entry is checked and corrected if necessary. This makes it very portable. It means it can be installed onto a memory stick, and that memory stick can be plugged into just about any Windows PC, all you need to do is run accounts.exe, and the accounts system will run. You can install it on a memory stick during installation, or you can install onto your hard disk, then copy the '**Adminsoft Accounts**' folder onto the memory stick (don't forget, the short cuts on your desktop and Windows Start menu will then be pointing to the version installed on your hard disk).

INDEX

- A/c Payable ledger 21,175
- A/c Receivable ledger 21
- Accruals 176
- Adding images to print/PDF 289
- Adjust stock 141
- Adjustment (sales transactions) 57
- Adjustment Reason Code 31,43
- Adminsoft (Windows CDO) 408
- Adminsoft Accounts (Chilkat) 408
- Adminsoft Accounts (Outlook) 408
- Advice note 58
- Age of stock 139
- Allocating payments received 53,69
- Allow user login 440
- Allow user to backup 440
- Alternative supplier address 167
- Annual accounting scheme 105
- Apple Mac 7
- Asset 186
- Asset cost 218
- Asset images 219,293
- Asset Register 215
- Asset type 217
- Asset Type Code 32,43
- Associated items 148
- Authorized (P/O) 166
- AutoManager 21,33,163,269
- AutoManager - cashing up 374
- AutoManager - job/service types 380
- AutoManager - Parts Counter 369
- AutoManager - Service Counter 377
- AutoManager job images 293
- AVCO 130,168,172
- Background images 301
- Background screen 26,37
- Backing up 16,443
- Balance Sheet 189
- Bar code 138,140
- Base currency 257
- Bin location 132
- Bounced payment 57
- Budget group 191,214
- Budgets 213
- Build order 163
- Business Type Code 31,42
- Capital item flat rate scheme 90
- Cash accounting scheme 81,98
- Cash Book account 192
- Cash drawer 375
- Cash flow group 191
- Cash Flow statement 190
- Cash Flow Statement Groups 32,43
- Cashing up 374,405
- CIS 303
- CIS contractor 308
- CIS declarations 320
- CIS purchase invoices 315
- CIS rate 312
- CIS Return 309
- CIS sales invoice 305
- CIS setting up 309
- CIS subcontractor 303
- CIS subcontractor verification 313
- CIS submission 318
- CIS verification number 312
- CN code 136
- CO2 emissions 366
- Codes 31,42
- COGS 188
- Commission (staff) 133
- Company vehicle images 293
- Company/Organization setup 12
- Construction Industry Scheme 303
- Controlling orders/jobs 252
- Corporation Tax 200
- Cost price 161,167
- Country Codes 32,43
- Create an email shot 412
- Create contra 57
- Create customer account 46,62
- Create order/job 244
- Create Purchase Order 160,163
- Creating a payroll 328,352
- Credit 187
- Credit notes (customer) 72
- CSV file 155,430
- Currency 192,257
- Currency - account 259
- Currency - invoices 264
- Currency - payments 267
- Currency - setting up 257
- Currency Codes 32,43
- Customer transaction images 295,298
- Debit 187

using adminsoft accounts

Debit Note received 72
Decimal places 172
Delivery note 156
Department Codes 32,43
Depreciation - charge 218
Depreciation - reducing balance 217
Depreciation - scrap value 218
Depreciation - straight line 217
Depreciation - sum of digits 218
Diary entry images 293
Direct payments 192
Discount code 123
Discount on retail 124
Discounts 121
Dividend - declare 200
Dividend - pay 200
Documents 435
Document layout download 286
Document layout upload 286
Document/report output selection 271
Double entry bookkeeping 187
Downloading Adminsoft Accounts 7
Early settlement 57,126
EC Sales List 118
Editing document layouts 271
Editing HTML document layouts 279
Email - Chilkat 408
Email - Microsoft Outlook 408
Email - sending 425
Email - Windows CDO 408
Email - Windows default 409
Email report 428
Email shots 239,407
Email shots - create 412
Email shots - data output 415
Email shots - email engine 417
Email shots - HTML 415
Email shots - import data 240
Email shots - opt out list 241
Email shots - setting up 407,410
Employee details 330,354
Employee images 293
Employee leaving 342
Employee vehicles 361,365
Equipment/Vehicle images 293
Equipment/Vehicle makes 32,43,379
Equipment/Vehicle models 379
Equipment/Vehicle types 32,43
Equipment/vehicles setting up 378
Equity 186
Error log 432
Estimate 58,225,226
Estimate documents 234
Estimate images 234,237,295
Estimate links 235
EU and VAT 118
Exchange rate 259
Exclude from tax/VAT period end 26
Expense 186
Factors 59,175
FIFO 130,168,172
Flat rate scheme 90,105
Foreign currency bank account 259
FPS 336
Free Accounting with Free Software 6
General images 293
General Ledger 157,185
General Ledger – entering transactions 194
General Ledger – recurring transactions 202
General Ledger - standing transactions 205
General Ledger account 187,190
General Ledger account images 193
General Ledger sales tax/VAT 81,188
General Ledger transaction images 196,295
Getting started 45,61
HTML document layout images 283,292
HTML document layouts 279
Human Resources 21,33
Image scanning 296
Images 289,442
Importing data 30,151,206,240
Income 186
Income tax 343
Install log 422
Installation 7,420
Installing ZIP file 8
Internet 19
Intrastat 118
Inventory 21,81,131
Invoice register 183
ISO3166 47,63,119,213
ISO4217 258
Job/Service types 32,43
Journals 194,198
Kits 141
LAST (cost) 130,168,172
Leads 225,226
Ledger currency 258
Level 1 131
Level 2 56,71,135
Liability 186
LIFO 130,168,172
Linux 7
LIST (cost) 130,168,172

using adminsoft accounts

Lists output selection 272,426
Managing images 299
Manufacturer 147,161
Markup on cost 124
Maximum quantity 137
Menu Bar 435
Michael Towle 5
Microsoft Outlook 408
Min order qty 148,162
Minimum quantity 137,163
Multi-currency 257
Networking 17
NI 344
Nominal Ledger 157,185
Nominal Ledger – entering transactions 194
Nominal Ledger – recurring transactions 202
Nominal Ledger – standing transactions 205
Nominal Ledger - VAT 99,188
Nominal Ledger account 187,190
Nominal Ledger account images 193
Nominal Ledger transaction images 196,295
Non-stock item 163
Opening balances 29,40
Order confirmation 245
Order production control 248
Order/Job 226
Order/job charges/costs 247
Order/job documents 246
Order/job images 246,295
Order/job invoices 248
Order/job proforma invoices 248
Order/job sheet 245
Order/job tracked documents 246
Our price 133
Out of balance postings 220
P&L and B/S report groups 32,43
P45 342
P60 340
Parts counter 369
Parts Counter - booking in 383
Parts Counter - print job card 393
Parts Counter - sell part 372
Parts Counter - invoice preview 392
Parts Counter - job details 389
Parts Counter - job/service types 380
Parts Counter - tasks 387
Parts Counter - workshop codes 380
Parts Counter - workshop schedule 386
PAYE 326
Payment method 180
Payment Type Codes 32,43
Payments received 52,68
PayPal - import data 206
Payroll 323,347
Payroll - FPS 336
Payroll - income tax 343
Payroll - NI 344
Payroll - P45 342
Payroll - P60 340
Payroll - paying employees 336
Payroll - payslip details 334,358
Payroll - payslips 328,350
Payroll - posting 3rd party figures 201
Payroll - reports 363
Payroll - RTI 323,327,367
Payroll - running 332,356
Payroll - setting up 347
Payroll - tax rates and bands 326
Payroll - tax year end 340
Payroll - UK 323
Payroll - XML 337
Payroll Additions/Deductions 32,43,325,348
Payslip details 334,358
Payslips 328,350
Pensions 188
Point of Sale 400
POS - activate cutter 376,399
POS - cash drawer 375,398
POS - cashing up 374,405
POS - customer tab 401
POS - kitchen printer 377,399
POS - next receipt number 396
POS - next tab number 396
POS - open cash draw 376,399
POS - output port 376,399
POS - printer width 376,399
POS - receipt printer 375,398
POS - roll out lines 376,399
POS - till float 376,398
POS - till number 375,398
POS customer payment 403
Posting method 208
Postponed VAT scheme 90,95
Preferred supplier 147,161
Prepayments 176
Price per 133
Print HTML 428
Print options 271,426
Print/PDF images 289
Print/PDF layouts 271
Print/PDF orientation 275
Print/PDF paper size 275
Print/PDF tax analysis 278

using adminsoft accounts

Printing 423,426
Profit & Loss 189
Proforma invoice 58,182
Prospect archived 224
Prospect details 223
Prospect images 225
Prospect statistics 225
Purchase Analysis Code 31,42,137
Purchase discount band 129
Purchase Discount Code 31,42,129
Purchase discounts 121
Purchase invoice 80,96,169,175
Purchase Ledger 33,175
Purchase Order 178
Purchase Order Processing 81,159
Purchase Order settings 171
Quantity break 124
Quote price 140,145,370
Re-order level 137,163
Reason for payment 195,197
Receipt printer 375
Receive stock 155,168
Recurring invoice 58
Register software 10,421
Reminders 437
Reminders – recurring 437
Remittance Advice 179
Remittance Advices 59
Report group 191
Report/document output selection 271,426
Reserve stock 140,145
Restricting user access 439
Retail price 173
Retained profit 200
Return to supplier 157
Reverse charge 90,95
Reverse transaction 194
RTI 323,327,367
Run Report button 271
Sales Analysis Code 31,42
Sales Discount Code 31,42,124
Sales discounts 121
Sales graph 134
Sales invoice 49,64,78,96
Sales Ledger 33
Sales Order Processing 21,33,243
Sales Prospecting 21,33,223
Sales tax 73
Sales Tax - setting up 23
Sales Tax Codes 32,43
Sales tax period end 83
Sales tax period end summary 84
Saved transaction 58
Security 439
Security profile 440
Service Counter 377
Shop/Cafe Manager 21,33,395,400
Shop/Cafe Manager COGS 397
Shop/Cafe Manager customer payment 403
Shop/Cafe Manager customer tab 401
Shop/Cafe manager setting up 396
Shop/Cafe Manager vouchers 396,403
Solaris 7
Source transaction 193
Special prices (customer) 150
Spreadsheet bridge 108
Standing transactions 205
Statement of Financial Position 189
Statement of Income 189
Stock code/SKU 132
Stock Control 33,99,131
Stock controlled 136
Stock item alternatives 149
Stock item archive 141
Stock item merge 141
Stock item Qty.Rem 143
Stock item - sales analysis 371
Stock item analysis 142
Stock item cost analysis 138
Stock item details 125,404
Stock item images 140,293,371
Stock item sales history 165,371
Stock item solvent content 132
Stock item type 132
Stock item weight 132
Stock movements 143
Stock purchases 144
Submitting VAT Return 106
Supersessions 149
Supervisor 440
Supplier invoice 169
Supplier item record 146
Supplier transaction images 295
Surcharge 133,148,162
Tax calculator 51
Till Open Reason Codes 32,43
Tips 419
Toolbar 435
Trial Balance 190,220
Trouble shooting 419
UK Domestic Reverse Charge 90,95
Undo Sales tax/VAT period end 85
Unit of issue 133
Unit of issue 148,162

- Updating Adminsoft Accounts 422
- Users – allow backups 440
- Users – allow login 440
- Users – restricting access 439
- Users – security profile 440
- Users - setting up 27,38
- VAT 73,87
- VAT - error 109
- VAT - MTD errors 115
- VAT - MTD submission 103,109
- VAT - MTD with spreadsheet 105,107
- VAT - Northern Ireland 92
- VAT - setting up 23,35
- VAT - test mode 108
- VAT calculator 51,66
- VAT Codes 32,43
- VAT Flat Rate scheme 105
- VAT period end 83,101
- VAT period end summary 84,102
- VAT rates 87,92
- VAT registration number 36,88,92
- View HTML 427
- View report 427
- Wholesale changes to stock 151
- Workshop codes 380
- Workshops 32,43
- Write off 57
- XML document 337
- Year end transactions 200