DATAFLOW
Financial Software Solutions

Navigating the System

Contents

Introduction

dataflow is a modular accounting system engineered to bring powerful yet easy to use procedures and extensive control options into the most fundamental area of business operation. For those familiar with windows applications the *dataflow* interface should present few, if any, obstacles. Those not so familiar and even non-accounting professionals can relax as they discover how straightforward the system is to operate.

This guide is intended to provide a thorough overview of *dataflow* operations but should not be considered a detailed instruction manual.

The menus within each module are presented on a common theme which means finding your way around to setup, administer and operate the system can be learnt quite easily.

The first few sections cover general aspects of using *dataflow*. After this, each of the modules is covered separately starting with System Manager. Next, Nominal Ledger because it is the core of the accounts process followed by Sales and Purchase Ledgers.

When initially implementing the system, Sales and Purchase Ledgers may be setup before the Nominal but you may have to return to some routines to complete references to Nominal account codes. It is strongly recommended to review all set up parameters prior to linking the Sales and Purchase ledgers to the Nominal.

Starting dataflow

Once installed on your computer open *dataflow* by clicking once on its menu item on Start-Program Menu. Alternatively, you may choose to use a shortcut on the desktop, in this case click it twice in succession.

After launching dataflow you be asked for your Username and Password login details. Only the Password is case sensitive.

If you have not been issued a Username and Password please contact internal IT personnel to acquire them.

The dataflow Interface

Mouse

Using the mouse is the standard way of navigating your way around the software. Use the mouse for menu selections, selecting entry fields within a window and also to control window displays themselves i.e. change size and position on the desktop.

Below are some terms you may be familiar with;

Point *Slide the mouse on the desk to move the screen pointer to specific location.*

Click *Quickly press and release the left mouse button at the specific location.*

Double Click *Quickly press and release the left mouse button twice at the specific location.*

Drag *Hold down the left mouse button whilst moving the mouse across the page. This technique is used to drag a window border to increase or decrease window size. Also drag the window title bar to reposition the entire window.*

Right Click *Quickly press and release the right mouse button at the specific location. This function usually displays a pop-up menu that is directly associated with the object/ location you have right clicked on.*

The mouse pointer can also take on different shapes depending on the kind of action that is being performed and what it is you are currently pointing at. For example the pointer will become an hourglass when *dataflow* is performing an update or making a request to the database server.

It is likely that most of you will be familiar with the basic mouse operation so In addition to using the mouse device the system has been designed to support keyboard short-cuts particularly for data-entry routines. If memorized and utilized effectively these keyboard short-cuts can significantly increase your navigational and input speeds.

Keyboard Operation

When entering data, keyboard operation is likely to be favored due to its increased performance over the mouse.

You may have noticed that usually the majority of recognized software packages will have a menu system and in the menu system some or all of the options will have one letter underlined. Later versions of windows requires the Alt key to be depressed before the command letter is either displayed or underlined so if you cannot see an underlined letter on any menu press the Alt key.

The Alt key is your No. 1 friend; combine this with, either the underlined or displayed letter and this function will automatically navigate you to the relating window.

For example: you currently have just logged in and only have the main menu on screen. In order to navigate to go to the Sales Ledger you would press ' Alt + 'L' then with Alt still held immediately press 'S'.

You don't have to wait for each menu to open before press the next key command as long as you carry them out in the correct order i.e. you can do this in quick succession, try it, with only the main menu open press `Alt` + 'L' then 'S' straight afterward (keeping `Alt` held down).

Try the following;

`Alt` + 'L' then 'S' then 'L' then 'V'   *Sales Ledger View Accounts*

`Alt` + 'L' then 'S' then 'T' then 'C'   *Sales Ledger Transactions Cash Receipts*

Once you've navigated using either the mouse or key commands to the required window you'll be able to use the same method to navigate through the tabs and fields but only this time you'll need to also hold the '`Shift` key down i.e. '`Shift` + '`Alt` then 'T' will navigate you to the 'Batch Totals' tab within the 'Sales Ledger Cash Receipts' window.

Once you've accessed a Transaction Window in addition to the mouse and `Alt` + 'Command' can also use the `Tab` key to jump between fields and buttons. You can also '`Tab` in the opposite direction by holding the '`Shift` .ey whilst Tabbing.

Try the Following within the Sales Ledger Cash Receipts window;

`Alt` + 'N'   *Nominal Code input field*

`Alt` + `Tab`   *Jump backwards from Nominal Code input to Account Input field*

`Alt` + 'A'   *Amount input field*

`Shift` + `Alt` + 'T'   *Batch Totals*

Window Styles

After you've accessed a window take a moment to familiarize yourself with its layout and content. You'll find that we have maintained a great deal of consistency with the button and tab layouts across *dataflow*, particularly within the transaction windows. This assists in reducing the initial learning curve required to familiarize yourself with the system and enables you to focus more on the actual input reducing mistakes and increasing efficiency in the long term.

As the windows look so similar the active window name will always be displayed on the top title bar.

You can access tabs either by simply clicking on the tab itself using the mouse or use the associated `Shift` + '`Alt` + 'Letter' key command mentioned earlier. In some cases each tab will represent a separate sub routine with its own editing controls (buttons) but in most cases each tab follows on from the previous tab providing stepping stones through the input procedure.
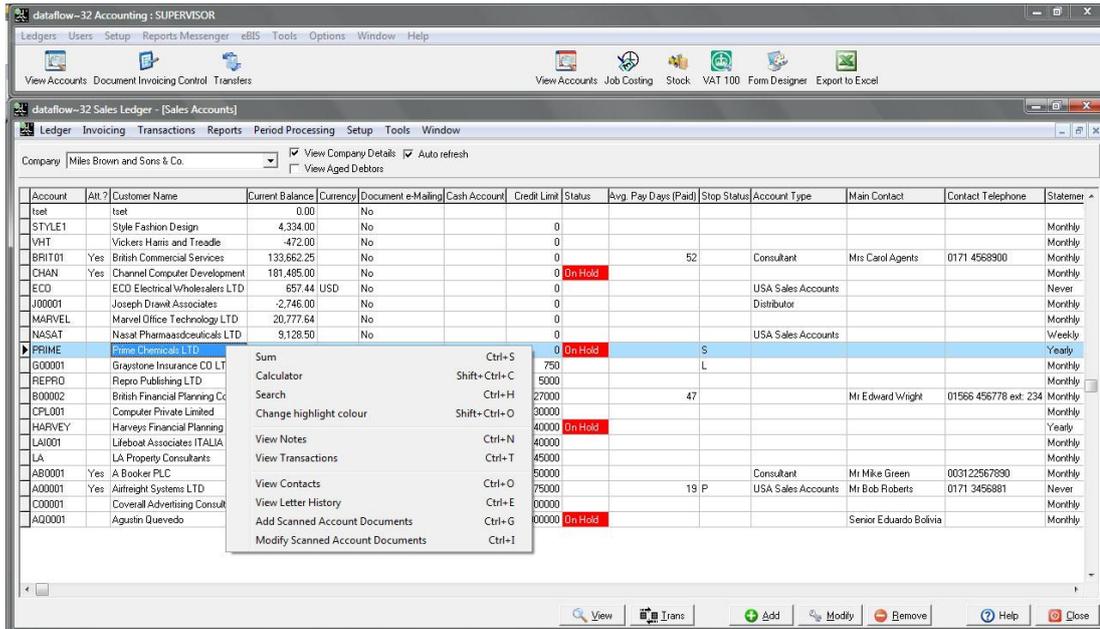
Grids

Grids within a window display details in row and column format. Each row reflects a record and each column identifies the entries associated with that record.

The columns can be moved allowing you to arrange them any way you choose. In order to move a column you simply move the mouse cursor over the column header you wish to move, click and hold down the left mouse button (at which point you'll notice a thick black line appear along the left hand edge of the associated column, *see image*) and drag the column left or right. You will only be able to move one column at a time but the column formation will be associated with your user record so provided your user record is being correctly saved your chosen format will be displayed then next time you log in using the same username and password.

Horizontal and vertical scroll bars let you browse information within a grid.

There is also a 'Right Click' shortcut menu available from most grids within *dataflow* and the options displayed can be specific to the field/ grid you've right clicked so you may find different options displayed dependant on where you've clicked. To access this sub menu hold the mouse cursor over a grid or specific field (depending on required action) then click the right mouse button to display shortcut menu options.

General options available on most grids include the 'calculator' and the 'sum' function. To add up a collection of values in a grid, highlight them by holding down the left mouse button and dragging the cursor over the required area then. Release the left mouse button, click the right mouse button and click sum. Other shortcut options vary according to the procedure in use and may operate on a selected grid item only.
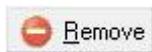
To select an item in a grid simply click anywhere on its row.

Button Controls

Each window, and most tab sheets, offer button controls situated either at the end or/ and down the right hand side of the display. The most familiar of these will be;

Button	Description
Add	*To enter a new record*
Modify	*To change an existing record*
Remove	*To remove an existing record*
Help	*Activates the On-Line help*
Close	*Closes current window*

The second set of more commonly used buttons will be
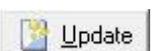
Button	Description
Update	*Updates the current or selected record*
Discard	*Cancels (changes to) the current record*
OK	*Accepts the current record*
Cancel	
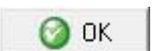
Cancel	*Cancels (changes to) the current record*
[View]	*Views selected record*
[Print]	*Prints selected record*
[Setup]	*Opens Pinter setup window*
[OnTop]	*Enables the use of multiple forms simultaneously but keeps the current ('On Top') form in front of all other open forms.*
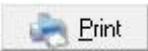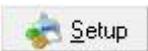
The buttons can either be selected using the left mouse button or the [Alt] + 'Letter' command.

You may find additional buttons throughout the system that are not listed here, as this is a generalized navigational section window specific buttons will be explained in their relevant sections.

On-Line Help

Context sensitive help for the current entry position is available by pressing the F1 key. Alternatively click the help button for information on the current procedure. Each help screen provides easy cross-reference to related topics.

SpeedBar

The *SpeedBar* can significantly increase your navigation speeds around the *dataflow* system, although not as quick if you'd mastered the [Alt] + Command functions but certainly a lot quicker than navigating to each menu. You can personalize your *SpeedBar* to specifically match your day to day navigational needs and once set will be saved against your user profile so the next time you log in it'll be there to greet you.
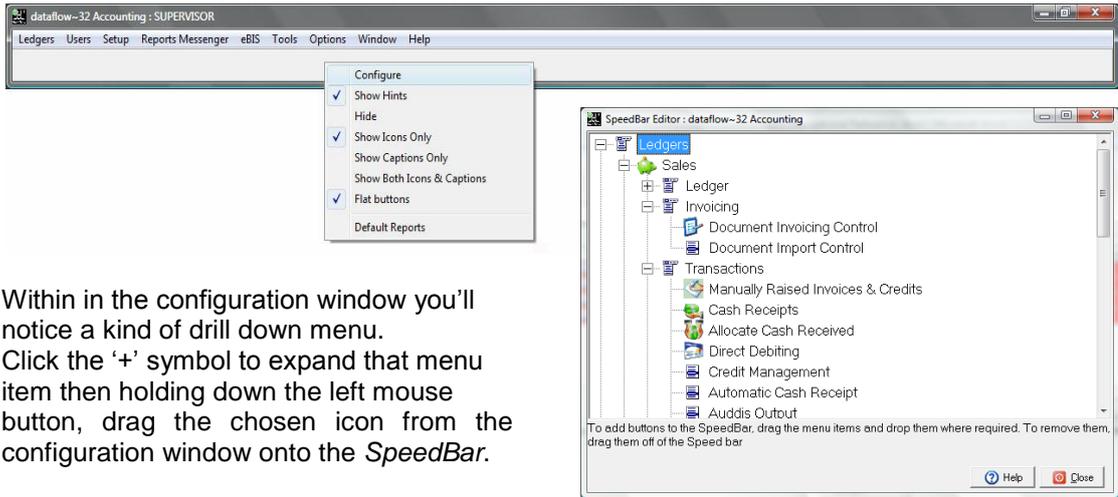
In order to activate the *Speedbar* you'll need to navigate to *Window* on the *dataflow* main menu and select *SpeedBar Visible* from the drop down menu.
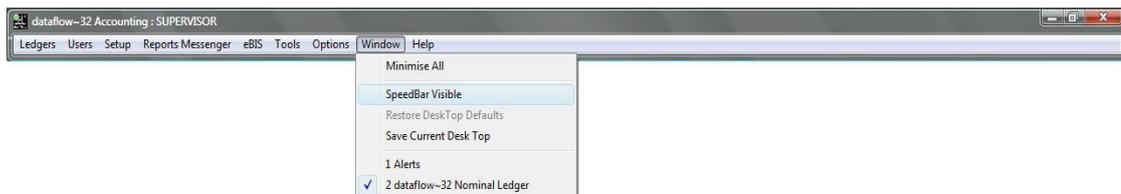
Once you've activated the *SpeedBar* you'll noticed a horizontal grey bar appear directly beneath the *dataflow* main menu. Like so;

Hover over the *SpeedBar* then click the right mouse button and choose the *Configure* option.

Within in the configuration window you'll notice a kind of drill down menu.
Click the '+' symbol to expand that menu item then holding down the left mouse button, drag the chosen icon from the configuration window onto the *SpeedBar*.

Once you've finished configuring your *SpeedBar* close the *SpeedBar Editor* window and open the required window by simply using the left mouse button on your newly acquired *SpeedBar* icon.

You may have also noticed in the right pop-up menu that there were several self explanatory *SpeedBar* options available;

> Show Icons Only
> Show Captions Only
> Show both Icons & Captions

You may return to the *SpeedBar Editor* and alter the *SpeedBar* setup at any time.

Search and Find

Grids and Drop-down Boxes

There are numerous ways to use the Search and Find utilities within *dataflow*. The first, most obvious, perhaps the most useful and most adopted is the ability to simply start typing what it is you are looking for in the relevant grid column or drop down box.

Another way would be to use the standard Window's Copy and Paste function. Select the text you want by using the Ctrl +C copy function you can copy a piece of text from within *dataflow* or anywhere else on your PC to the windows clipboard. Select the grid column or drop-down box you want to search in (by clicking the left mouse button or using the keyboard) and then press Ctrl + V to paste the text into the active field or drop down to find the record you are after.

Try this exercise as a practice;

> *Press and hold* Alt *then press L then S then L then V to open up the Sales Ledger/ View Accounts window.*

> *Select an account in the grid (preferably an account that's not top of the list) by clicking in the Account Code column and then press* Ctrl *+ C and close the window.*

Re-open the Sales Ledger View Accounts window, click in the Account Code column and press Ctrl *+ V to paste and you should, if performed correctly, notice that the system immediately locates that account. This action can be performed almost any grid or drop-down box in the system. A very useful tool to remember.*

All drop-down boxes have a *Find* feature assigned to them. To active this feature click on any drop-down box and press Ctrl · 'F' and you should be greeted with a *Find* parameter window. (This one was performed on the Company drop down selection)

Here's a breakdown of the parameter meanings;

  Type the characters you wish to search for.

  By checking this box the system will search from the beginning of the list.

  By checking this box the system will search using the character(s) in the Find section and match them too and display the first corresponding result.

  By checking this box the system will criteria will become case sensitive.

You can assign different Find parameters to almost any drop down selection within *dataflow*. Using the *Auto-Open* parameters you can define how you use the *Find* facility.

The following *Auto-Open* parameters refer to whether the Find feature will initiate when you "focus on" – that is click into or tab into - the drop-down box.
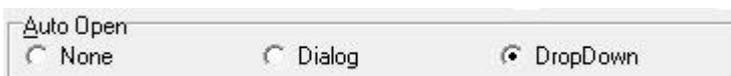
None   *With this option checked the Find feature will not become active until you manually choose to activate it using* Ctrl *+ F.*

Dialog   *With this option checked the Find feature parameter window will automatically open up when you focus on the drop-down box where this option was assigned.*

Drop Down

With this option checked the drop-down box where this was assigned will automatically drop down the selection listing.

Grid Highlight

You may have noticed in the previous screen shots of the View Accounts window that a single line in the grid is highlighted. This is a feature to enable you to easily identify which line in the grid is the currently selected.

This feature works throughout *dataflow* in all windows displaying a grid and as with most features in dataflow, it is also customizable. Access this option using the right click pop-up menu.