Accredited Partner: Advice for Solving 90% of Community Support Queries in 2016

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Posted in **BUSINESS**, **ACCOUNTING** - 22/1/2016

They say you *"can't teach an old dog new tricks"*. Well not so, there's always opportunities to learn one more feature! In the last 9 months, I've put the entire Reckon Community under the microscope. The findings were not surprising, but need mentioning, to fast track User queries on gaining the most from their investment in Reckon products. Yes, Reckon *"can handle the truth"* and follow-up has been taken on those 10% of calls that do highlight an issue needing resolution. But such requests easily get lost in the sheer volume of needless, repetitive queries for matters that are well resolved and documented.

To be proactive about improving all this, needed an IT as well as Accounting perspective on things - something that 40 years of experience in the IT industry whilst also holding FCPA credentials permits. The simple matter of taking stock of the Environment in which a User is running their favoured Reckon product is the starting point.

PREPARING YOUR QUESTION

I've prepared a community article on getting immediate **resolution to 90%** of the typical queries raised by Users: 6 ways to gain best Reckon Community Support around the clock.

What this article addresses, is putting in simple language, the way you can determine the programs and systems on your machine that can impact accounting programs. These include:

- Your operating system

- Your exact Reckon product in use

- Any Office Suite of programs used for Email, and Spreadsheets

- Your exact PDF making tool

- A summary of past upgrades of the above

- An example of the wording of any error message or the menu/steps being attempted

With just these 6 Environment matters nicely defined, the ability to search for results is made that much easier and more successful. In fact, the widely used Google Search engine is extremely powerful at joining up a combination of key word searches, leading straight to Reckon. This is because the Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) operations are well oiled and greased!

SEARCHING FOR ANSWERS

Say you have a query relating to the ability to email, using Reckon Accounts Premier 2015, running on Windows 7 but using live email.

Google search: 'Reckon Premier 2015 MS Live email win7 cannot email'

This will provide a link to the Reckon Community with an article addressing the query straight away. But underlying that example is an important Environment matter. "MS Live Email" is not a supported tool, but Outlook 20xx is. The above article also points out where and when you can obtain support and answers, in some cases, 24/7 around the clock.

ENVIRONMENT CONSIDERATIONS

When considering an additional software product, it is imperative that all pre-requisites (by Environment) per the Release Notes are considered. So, knowing those key points above, will help with such decisions. But there are three environments that can impact your experience:

- **System Environment**
  IE: your operating system, other programs on your PC, and the hardware
  Refer to: System environment solutions provided by Reckon Community Help

- **Local Area Network (LAN) environment**
  IE: other users on your network at the office
  Refer to: Common Network (LAN) environment issues solved through Reckon Community Support

- **Wide Area Network (WAN) environment**
  IE: other activity on the internet between you and your website/service of interest
  Refer to: Common Internet (WAN) environment issues solved through Reckon Community Support

Once you are aware of these three Environment aspects of using computers, you'll discover the impact that Capacity and Timeout has on so many factors. A good reminder of how seemingly unrelated activities end up being root causes of errors or poor experiences in some other area of the LAN, WAN or local System.

EXAMPLE OF ENVIRONMENT IMPACTING ACCOUNTING

Here's a light-hearted, memorable example of just how overlooked a capacity problem was. We share this solution from earlier this year. A client running Reckon Accounts Hosted was experiencing delays in the way transactions needed processing by three key staff. Specific tests and specifications of both their LAN and WAN Environment determined there should be adequate Capacity to enjoy a good accounting operation experience.

But not so. The cause was found to be another staff member streaming online music rather than listening to an offline iPod or what we used to call a 'wireless!'. We understand that our suggestion to encourage the member to buy a radio from the Good Guys for $50 and to stop soaking all the WAN capacity for his personal enjoyment, would really help the rest of the team trying to account for his wages and profit.

A good outcome, and one that was not at first considered. Why? Because most users focus only on the impact on them, and they only run one thing: Reckon.

AS 2016 TAKES MORE TO CLOUD, WATCH THE TRAFFIC

Cloud based systems are terrific, giving users the flexibility to use and reach their data from nearly anywhere. But what is often overlooked, is:

- where are you at the time, and

- who else is travelling a common path (WAN) at the same time

The WAN Environment article deals with the impact of congested internet services that lies between your local PC/tablet/smartPhone, and all the connections needed to reach your target internet page of interest (such as Reckon Accounts

Hosted or Reckon One). But it also relates to things we take for granted, like sending emails with reports. They all depend on the capacity and volume of traffic traveling the same 'air ways' so to speak. The WAN article mentioned, outlines in simple terms how those aspects can be measured and identified.

WHO'S COMPATIBLE WITH WHO?

This is an awkward but important point to table. The manufacturers of Operating Systems are few, and the rest of the world attempts to be compatible with them. It's not the other way around, unless there is some commercial endeavour going on in the sidelines where two organisations are trying to attract business between one another. For the 100s of 1000s or other software developers, vendors and integrators in the world, the compatibility question is a matter of trying to keep abreast of the Operating System vendors. One could argue that nobody can exist without an operating system. Others could argue that there is no point having operating systems unless there were APPS (programs) to go with them. But the real point to consider when dealing with a new support query, is who is backwards compatible with who. And the answer to that, is simple for most products. They can only attempt to be backwards compatible to the known released versions of dependent software that they know to exist at the time. Anything else, is totally confidential and for marketing reasons often strategically kept secret.

So, as a rule, the delivery date of any one of the six ingredients mentioned at the start of this article, will at best, only be compatible with System Environments known to exist at that point in time. This might help people with legacy products made in say 2012, realise that there may be environment considerations needed if attempting to run in a System environment using systems dated after that date. Again, it is not the reverse!

BASIS OF FINDINGS

The suggestions shared herein, are based on research performed and tabled at the following article, and are provided, without bias, other than to provide an open discussion on assisting Users get the best from their investment in products that the author happens to advocate.

How providing over $50,000 of pro bono support to the Community helped solve serious problems *AND* identified interesting trends!

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