PBS Tips and Tricks #22 – PBS Print to Disk Reports and Archiving

The archiving of Passport Business Solutions™ (PBS) reports, is part of the broader activities of file size management and purging/ archiving, which we will pursue even further in future Tips and Tricks. These purging/archiving activities "data processing hygiene" – i.e., include not letting the "junk" build to a point where it affects the efficiency of PBS, including your daily use of it. For example, slowing down the creation of reports, or by having so much out-of-date information being displayed in a query/display with data you do not want to see, makes it more difficult to produce your relevant data. This happens when scrolling down through lines and lines of 2, 3, or more year-old data and wondering why we are having to hit the scroll button so often!

A small accounting department of 2 or 3 people can easily generate 5 to 10 postings per day, per person, creating 100-150 postings per week and 500-600 per month. If using the Print-to-Disk (P2D) function to save postings as advocated in previous Tips and Tricks (#8), it is easy to accumulate that many print files for your postings in the saved reports area. Fast forward one year and there will be 6,000 or 7,000 reports. With a department of one, simply divide the above by 3, and you still get a large number of P2D files stored annually. This number becomes somewhat unmanageable and inefficient with larger departments as well. Many times, a search for reports is for saved print reports created during the past two weeks. The ability to restrict the search for a particular report by selecting reports created by a single application can help minimize this issue, but it can still become an issue.

On the technical side, when applying updates and data conversions, copying several years' worth of the P2D data as part of the conversion/upgrade, and perhaps ten or twenty thousand report files in the P2D area – adds a significant part to the upgrade processing time.

The solution, built into PBS, is the ability to archive these reports. PBS contains a process to move files for the P2D reports out of the "main" print-to-disk area into an alternate area – the Archive - that is still available for querying and print, but is out of the way of daily use. The screen shot below of the "Print-Reports from disk" function shows an example set of print reports simulating several years of saving reports using the P2D function. By default, the list is sorted in descending order by date, with 2021 reports at the top. Moving down the page, the years get older until we get to 2018 and possibly older.

If you are not familiar with the graphical form of this screen, please note that this screen shows you the first ten lines of a highlighted report, allowing you to confirm if that report is the one you wish to select. Also note the five column headings in red, indicating sort and filter columns so that by selecting the User or Pkg column you may sort by that header attribute. In addition, you may enter the first of several characters of the User initials or package abbreviation to jump directly to the first matching entry.

If you want to archive anything older than the beginning of the last calendar year –a common practice, assuming you are on a calendar financial year, you would archive all reports prior to the beginning of your current financial year. In this case it would be prior to 2020 because having closed and published your financials for 2019, any data issues and problems in that year would be fixed in the current year and so all the reports for that prior year are in effect fixed.

To archive these reports, select the Archive function at the top of the "Print from disk" screen highlighted above. A selection screen appears:

Select archive range

File   Tools   Help

By report number or date `Date ▼`

Starting report number `"Earliest"`

Ending report number `12/31/2019`

`OK`   `Cancel`
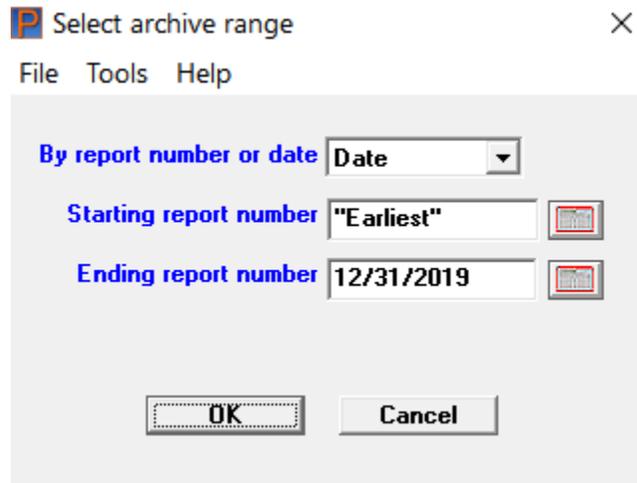
In the drop-down list we have changed the default, which is archived by report number, to archive by date and entered a date range which will cover everything in our P2D set of reports from the beginning to the end of 2019. Then select OK to do the archiving. The 'print from disk' lookup list will change from the above eliminating the 2019 P2D as they are now Archived:

Pkg	Report #	Report name	Created ▼		User	Pages	Last printed		File name
PR	100059	Deductions Register	01/26/2021	16:06	PSI	2			00PR0100059
PR	100058	Payroll Register	01/26/2021	16:06	PSI	12			00PR0100058
PR	100057	Time Worked Register	01/26/2021	16:06	PSI	8			00PR0100057
PR	100056	Deductions Register	01/26/2021	14:28	PSI	2			00PR0100056
PR	100055	Payroll Register	01/26/2021	14:28	PSI	12			00PR0100055
PR	100054	Time Worked Register	01/26/2021	14:28	PSI	8			00PR0100054
PR	100053	Deductions Register	01/26/2021	14:20	PSI	2			00PR0100053
PR	100052	Payroll Register	01/26/2021	14:20	PSI	12			00PR0100052
PR	100051	Time Worked Register	01/26/2021	14:20	PSI	8			00PR0100051
PR	100050	Payroll Register	12/04/2020	12:29	PSI	12	12/04/2020	12:29	00PR0100050
PR	100049	Time Worked Register	12/04/2020	11:49	PSI	8	12/04/2020	11:49	00PR0100049
OE	100048	Misc. Charges / Sales Journal	12/01/2020	21:26	PSI	2			000E0100048
OE	100047	Misc/Drop Ship Item Register	12/01/2020	21:26	PSI	1			000E0100047
PO	100046	Receivings Register	12/01/2020	19:43	PSI	1			00PO0100046
PO	100045	Receivings Register	12/01/2020	19:41	PSI	1			00PO0100045
PO	100044	Purchase Order Register	12/01/2020	19:40	PSI	1			00PO0100044
PO	100043	Purchase Order Register	12/01/2020	19:32	PSI	1			00PO0100043
GL	100042	Distributions Register	11/10/2020	13:12	PSI	2			00GL0100042

A PBS file SPOOLF has the data used by the program to create the lookup/index seen in the above screen shots. The archive function moves all of the reports in the RWPRT folder covered by the selected range into a folder in the RWPRT folder called ARCHIVE. To update the index, the program also moves all the data corresponding to the lookup/index data for the archived reports to a file called ARCHIVE which, like the SPOOLF file, resides in the top-level PBS folder. As you can see from the above, the move will also clear the entries for the moved print files from the SPOOLF file and remove them from the display.

Archive may be run multiple times to periodically move reports from the main area to the Archive area, keeping your PBS system easier to navigate.

The archived reports can be easily printed or viewed. To do this, select the 'Archived reports' sub-menu entry under the 'Print reports from disk' menu:
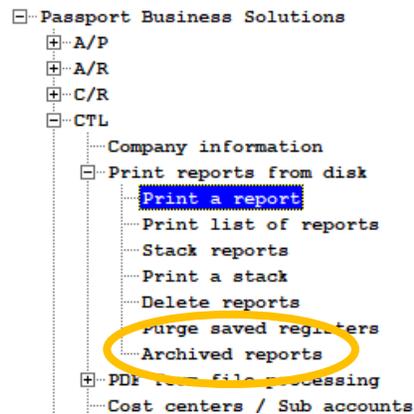
This function will produce a lookup/index screen, the same as the regular 'print from disk' screen, except that the Archive function is disabled, signifying you are presently in the Archive folder. The sorts, selects, and preview window at the bottom, are all the same. Also, printing to a printer and creating a PDF are available. The difference with the archive display, is the archive of reports starts with the most recent of the reports archived – in this case, reports from 2019.