



Tips and Tricks #58 - PBS Log Files - What Are They and Why Use Them

There are times when it is important to know how some data in a particular reference file (master file) has the contents it contains, and who had a hand in those changes. This is the purpose of the set of Passport Change Log files which are (optionally) automatically populated after any change. These files are used by the system to automatically record changes to master file data so that the date/time of the change, the contents of the change and the individual who made the change are available either for historical context or for forensic purposes.

There are 9 Change log files for seven applications. (GL has three). Their names all begin with “CNG” e.g. “CNGVEN”, “CNGCUS” etc. The list is:

- AP change vendor log
- AR (customers)
- GL (chart of accounts, budgets, comparatives)
- IC (item master)
- JC (Job cost master file)
- PR (employees)
- TB (Time & Billing client master)

In the Financial side of the system, there are also four non change-log files with the CNGxxx name format which belong to Purchase Orders application - PO Change Transactions. In the Manufacturing system there are also two such non-change-log files – one for Customer Orders and one for Product Purchasing. All of these are transaction files, not master/reference files and so are not part of our concern here with master information tracking.

Setup

To turn on (or off) the automated recording of changes, check the “Use change log” field on the first tab of the company information screen (CTL/Company information) bottom left corner in the Security box:

The screenshot shows the company information screen for Passport Software, Inc. The fields include:

- Company display name: Passport Software, Inc.
- Address line 1: 181 Waukegan Road
- Address line 2: Suite 200
- Address line 3: Northfield IL 60093
- Phone: 847-729-7900
- Year 2000 cutoff: 30
- Use reformat account option: []

The Security box contains the following options:

- Allow protected changes: [x]
- Use passwords: [x]
- Use change log: [x]

Other sections include:

- Batch controls: Use batch controls [], Last batch # used []
- Cross reference file: Use cross reference file [], Scan accounts pop-up box default []
- Print reports from disk: Protected disk reports: Not protected
- Registers: Save registers [x], # days before warning: 120

This logging function is turned on or off for the whole company you are currently working in. This means that the logging of any changes to the files mentioned above will start automatically and will continue until turned off (also for the whole company). This implies a very practical issue because in most systems this is turned on for every active company. (Worthwhile to check this!) In our experience, many company personnel are not aware of this, and since some companies have been running PBS for years, it is not uncommon for PSI Support to see huge files filled with say, ten or more years' worth of data that customers are not aware of.

If you don't want to use the log files, then purge all the data files affected using the above list and then turn the function off via unchecking. If you believe this feature will be useful, you will probably want to purge the file of older data and then establish a routine to review the recent content. One way of doing this is to, e.g. quarterly, print the report to a PDF file (which can be then saved anywhere under a name like "Customer File changes Jan to Mar 2024"). After that, purge the file so you are starting the next quarter fresh. (The suggestion of quarters here is just a for-instance and the period could be monthly or annual or some other period.) Whatever the period length, this keeps the file sizes reasonable but still provides you with access to all the past changes applied to the master files. (Note this whole logging system has lain fallow – under-utilized and unattended – for years but is in the process of being updated by Passport, part of the motivation for this T&T.)

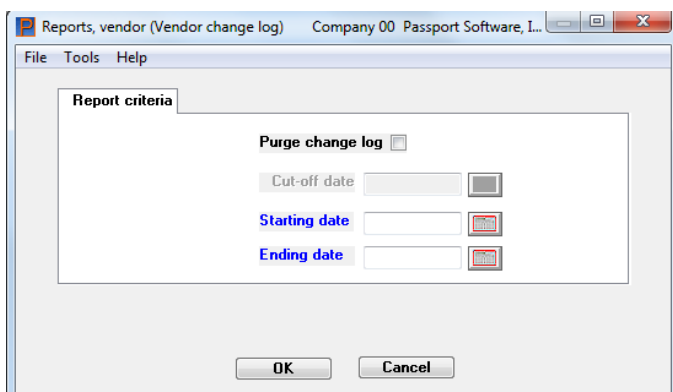
Running the Reports

The reports that will print a change log are located in different but similar locations in the menu section for each application:

- AP/Reports, vendor/Vendor change log
- AR/Reports, customer/Change log
- GL/Reports (lists)/ - 3 change log reports
- IC/Reports/Item change log
- JC/Reports/Job change log
- PR/Reports, Employee-Employer/Employee change logTB/Reports, client/Change log

The Reports have a similar set up:

e.g. the Payroll, GL, Vendor and Customer Change Log report selection screen looks like this:



- All date fields refer to the change date
- And specifically, for the Purge, the cut-off date is the last date of a change
- The other three modules (IC, JC, TB) have not been fully graphicalized and so have not been upgraded yet with the selection features including the date range feature which means that the full file will be dumped.

Details of report

Since all the change log functions behave similarly, we will start with the common features:

- Changes and deletes are recorded (adds are currently not recorded)
- For changes the “before picture” and “after picture” are shown so comparisons can be made. The after picture is introduced with something like:
 - **“Changed by: PDD on 07/30/24 to become”** with the changed record data following
 - Also, the changed fields are also underlined with asterisks
- For deletes the “before picture” is shown and then the lines (sample):
 - **“Changed by: PDD on 07/30/24 to become”\ *** Deleted *** “**

Where a date range input is provided you can select the range of change-dates to review. With the older versions of the program, the listing is currently all the data (hence the suggestions above for cycle purging and saving the outputs as PDF’s.)

A sample of the report is shown below with features highlighted. Some details of the formatting e.g. the presence of tables in the report, are not original and are artifacts of converting the PDF to a Word document):

VENDOR CHANGE LOG

Purge change log ? N
 Cut-off date (Not applicable)
 Starting date 7/15/24
 Ending date "Latest"
 Vendor status: Blank = normal A = always take discount H = hold payment N = not to be purchased from
 Terms type: D = days P = proximo (day of next month)

Report location :D:\AcctgApps\PSI-systems_Pgms,Docs\V12.08.06\RWWRK\18563934.pdf

Vend-#	Name	Contact-1	Phone-1	1099-ID-#	A/P-Acct-#	Terms Desc.
Status	Address	Contact-2	Phone-2	1099-ID-type	Disc-acct-#	Type Due-days
Type	Vend-ref-#	Last-purch-date	1099-amt-YTD	Dflt-dist-acct-#	Cutoff Disc-days	
Pmt-grp	1099 Type	Current-Balance	1099-amt-nxt-yr		Disc-%	
600	First Bank			2000-000		Monthly Payment
	821 Michigan Avenue			5050-100	P	20
BNK			0.00	7100-000		Month end 0
MON	Chicago, IL 60602	None	0.00	0.00		0.00
Country: USA						
State ID #:						
ACH info: Bank code:						
Default contact #: 403 Use pay-to ? Yes Pay-to #: 600						
Checking account #: Prenotification ? No						
Date:						
		PTD	YTD	Last-year	#	DATE
		-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	Purchases	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	
	Discounts	0.00	0.00	0.00	1161	7/31/22
	Payments	0.00	0.00	0.00	1048	4/30/22
	Memo purchases	0.00				
						AMT

						0.00
						25.00
						15.50

-----LAST CHECK-----

Changed by: PDD on 07/30/24 to become

600 **First Bank of Illinois** 2000-000 Monthly Payment

 821 Michigan Avenue 5050-100 P 20
 BNK **Suite 488** 0.00 7100-000 Month end 0

 MON Chicago, IL **60603** None 0.00 0.00 0.00

Country: USA -----LAST CHECK-----

State ID #: Default contact #: 403 Use pay-to ? Yes Pay-to #: 900

ACH info: Bank code:	Checking account #:	PTD	YTD	Prenotification ? No	Date:	#	DATE	AMT
Purchases	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	0.00			
Discounts	0.00	0.00	0.00	1161	7/31/22			25.00
Payments	0.00	0.00	0.00	1048	4/30/22			15.50
Memo purchases	0.00							

PDD Petetr Dalziel 2000-000
 24 Glen Elm 5050-100 D 0
 0.00 5200-000 0
 None 0.00 0.00 0.00

Country: -----LAST CHECK-----

State ID #:	Default contact #:	Use pay-to ? No	Checking account	#:	Prenotification ? No	Date:	#	DATE	AMT
ACH info: Bank code:	PTD	YTD	Last-year						
Purchases	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	0.00				0.00
Discounts	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	0.00				0.00
Payments	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	0.00				0.00
Memo purchases	0.00								

Changed by: PDD on 07/30/24 to become
 *** Deleted ***

2 Changes on files

Thank you for reading our latest Tips & Tricks. If you have any questions or comments, please give us a call or send us an email at psi@pass-port.com.

The Passport Team

