Tips & Tricks #32 – Archiving GL and Changing Fiscal Years – Part 1

Sometimes, those of us "been there done that" "been around the block" people try something in PBS that we haven't had an opportunity to try before. And when it works, if we are not too blasé, it is maybe even a little exciting!

The General Ledger has had a feature for several years now that purges and archives prior years of data. In effect, the data is moved out of the production company and saved in a way that keeps it accessible but out of the way. What is this, how does it work and why would you use it?

A recent real-life example from our support logs is especially applicable to our long-time PBS customers. You may recall that more than 10 years ago we introduced a feature that automatically retained prior year detail when you closed the fiscal year. Prior versions of PBS (and RealWord) computed the summary balance-forward amounts and then deleted the prior year detail as part of the closing process. This new feature was useful because for every year that you closed, you could go back and do queries and run Trial Balances and run financial statements; these reporting features typically being used for research and identifying longer term trends. Since these prior years are closed, data entry of any updates or adjustments are not allowed as the data is read-only.

When any major new features are added to a system there can be additional complexities or requirements for changes in your paper flow or process. In this case, it was the year-on-year accumulation of many years of distribution detail and therefore the build-up of large amounts of data in the GL files for your company. This can strongly effect reporting responsiveness.

Case in point - a client recently upgraded to V12.07 and had accumulated 12 years' worth of financial details. But worse, because of high annual volume of data running in a multi-store environment, they had accumulated *over 7 million records*. With this much data, even with the efficiencies built into PBS, the financials took several minutes for each report, and running a complete set of Financials might take 30 minutes or more.

In discussing the possibility of purging their older GL data, this client took a conservative approach and decided to keep 4 years of prior year data in the production environment. This cut the file size down by one half and roughly doubled the processing speeds.

The brilliant part of this is that besides the option to just purge the data and thus otherwise lose it, you can also archive the data that is being purged. The program does this by creating a completely new company for just this data and copying it from the production company before doing the purge. In other words, the main production system is relieved of the overhead of having all that data in its files; but the data is still available in a separate company which can be accessed easily by using the Switch Company selection from the CTL menu. Queries and printouts can be done from the Archived GL company in the normal way.

How does it work?

This procedure is described in the General Ledger manual in the appendix "**Purging and Archiving Fiscal Years**"

- Note: Because this process alters important areas of the system including control files, only an Administrative level user may run these functions.

- And most importantly, complete a full backup of the PBS system before archiving… just in case.

- Determine how many fiscal years you want to keep – the program purges by fiscal year so if you purge a fiscal year, all data in that fiscal year is purged. It is important to note that if you are using non-calendar fiscal years, the program will follow the fiscal years, not the calendar year. For example, if your year-end closing is June, and you purge through fiscal 2017, then all data through June 2017 will be purged or archived and then purged. The data left in the live/production system will start in July 2017 – the first month of Fiscal 2018.

- For Windows, run the *PurgeGLFiscalYear.bat* from the PBS top level folder; or for Linux, *purgeglfiscalyear*.

- PBS GL will ask you for the "Last Fiscal year to purge." Data up to and including this fiscal year-end will be purged from the production system. Using our example of keeping four years of fiscal data and continuing with the example of a July to June fiscal year, we would enter "2017" here. Fiscal 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 would be kept. (Here, at this point in November 2021, we are assuming we are working in fiscal 2022 (July 2021 through June 2022) and the client wasn't counting the active year (2022) in these calculations. Of note, this purge/archive function will only purge closed fiscal years.

  Note also that the fiscal year must be entered as a 4-digit number, "2017."

- If you simply want to purge the data, hit ENTER on the next field to keep the "new company ID" empty. Otherwise put in a two-character ID for a company ID that does not currently exist. This can be letters or numbers e.g.," A1" for archive 1 or "17" as we did in this case because the latest year in the archive would be fiscal 2017. This will be the company ID that you enter into PBS to get to the data.

```
Purge GL Fiscal years                          Passport Business Solutions (tm)

    We need to know which is the last General Ledger fiscal year you
    wish to purge. We will then remove any accounting periods, transactions
    and comparatives belonging to this and any prior fiscal years.

                  Company ID to purge   00
                                        Test system
          LAST GL Fiscal year to purge ?   2017

    If you would rather backup this information to a new company,
    please enter a new company ID here  17






Leave blank to skip backup.
```

Once you have finished entering this setup data, the program will either proceed to purge the data or build a new, from scratch, company. Copy the data and then do the purge. The new company will consist of the system manager and the GL package only. The purged data from the production

company will have been copied here and if there are multiple years purged then the appropriate multiple account period entries for each fiscal year will also be built:
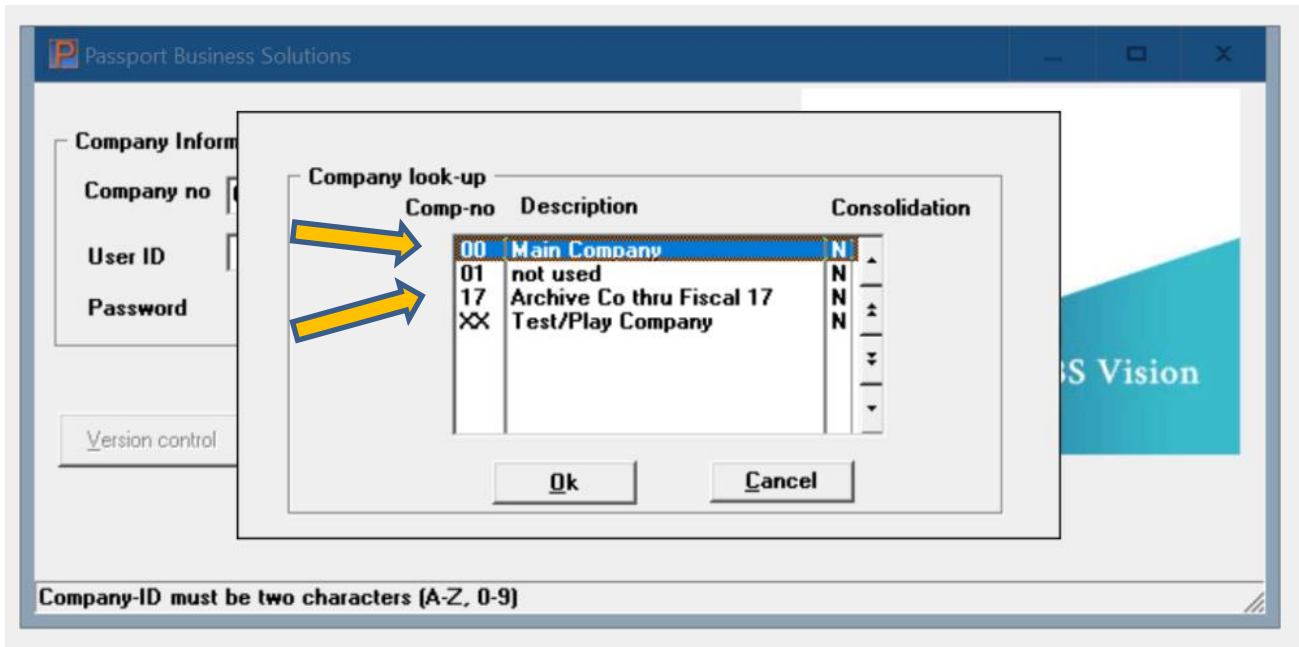
The upper orange arrow points to the production company and the lower one, the archive company through Fiscal 17.

Below is a screen shot of the before and after view of the Production company's GL View function. In the right hand shot (after purging), note all missing GL data prior to Fiscal 2018:
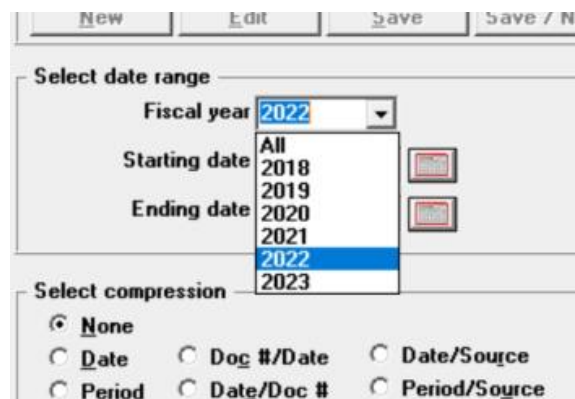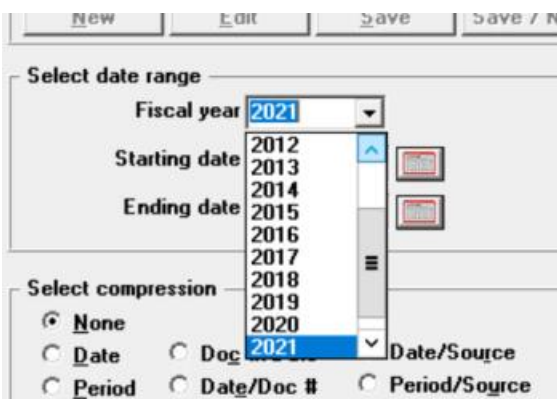
You might also notice that the right-hand screen now shows 2023. This is simply because after the archive and purge were done, we closed the 2021 year. As a result, the current year became 2022 and the 'next' year 2023.

The screen shot below is of the Fiscal Year look-up for the GL View function in the new Archive company #17:

Note that all years prior to 2017 inclusive have be included in the archive. This archive contains only the Company menu and the GL menu items:
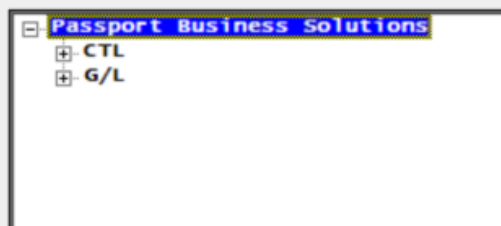
Here is the accounting periods screen for Fiscal 2017, the latest accounting period in the "17" archive:

	Fiscal year 2017				**Fiscal year 2018**	
Period	**Start**	**End**		**Period**	**Start**	**End**
1	06/26/2016	07/23/2016		1	06/25/2017	07/22/2017
2	07/24/2016	08/20/2016		2	07/23/2017	08/19/2017
3	08/21/2016	09/17/2016		3	08/20/2017	09/16/2017
4	09/18/2016	10/15/2016		4	09/17/2017	10/14/2017
5	10/16/2016	11/12/2016		5	10/15/2017	11/11/2017
6	11/13/2016	12/10/2016		6	11/12/2017	12/09/2017
7	12/11/2016	01/07/2017		7	12/10/2017	01/06/2018
8	01/08/2017	02/04/2017		8	01/07/2018	02/03/2018
9	02/05/2017	03/04/2017		9	02/04/2018	03/03/2018
10	03/05/2017	04/01/2017		10	03/04/2018	03/31/2018
11	04/02/2017	04/29/2017		11	04/01/2018	04/28/2018
12	04/30/2017	05/27/2017		12	04/29/2018	05/26/2018
13	05/28/2017	06/24/2017		13	05/27/2018	06/23/2018

Current fiscal year 2017 ▾   Entry period # 13 ▾ 05/28/2017 thru 06/24/2017

Reporting period 05/28/2017 ▢ thru 06/24/2017 ▢

A closer look may raise a question: Why is there a Fiscal 2018 in the GL accounting periods if we only archived thru 2017? This comes back to definitions: In the PBS system the left-hand side of the screen always defines the periods for the _current fiscal year_ and the right side for the next fiscal year. The archive process made 2017 the current fiscal year since it was the highest/last year archived and therefore the archiving process had to provide a completed right-hand side (Fiscal 2018). There is no data in Fiscal 2018.

In addition, and this will be explored in the next installment, the current period (2017) is considered open, not closed. (Periods prior to the current period are closed.) This implies that transactions could be entered into the Fiscal 2017 year, and this is true, although in the current context of purging/archiving prior years this is neither expected nor endorsed. You could close the 2017 Fiscal Year here and that would make it a closed year. The data for 2017 would then be read-only like the other years; but the closing process would then have to produce a panel like the one above except with 2018 on the left and 2019 on the right, neither of which would have any transactions. (Except for the carry-forwards calculated as opening balances for 2018 by the closing.) We have considered this situation more confusing than having 2017 left open. Stay tuned for more on this topic and its relation to changing fiscal years.