



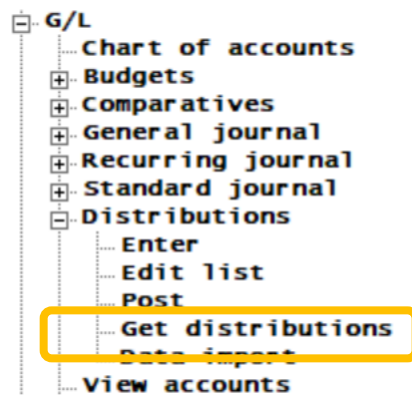
Tips & Tricks #49- GL Interfacing – Behind the Screens

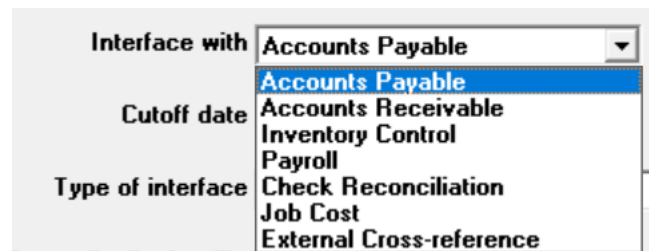
Several support issues in the past several months has indicated a lack of detailed knowledge regarding the process of interfacing sub-ledger data (AR, AP, PR etc.) to the Passport Business Solutions General Ledger. Although you can go for years without knowing the details of doing the interfaces and running the system by rote, it seems that opening the hood of the engine and looking at it would be useful. This as especially true for those “weird” cases that affect data from time to time and need some additional knowledge to sort out.

The PBS accounting system is comprised of 13 Financial and Distribution modules and 7 modules for Manufacturing. For those 20 modules that create general distributions we can refer to these as creating sub-ledger data (e.g., AR, PR, CR, IC and IM for example). This is data that is created and stored within the module and interfaced on some periodic schedule (frequently monthly). This means that, with the exception of several manufacturing modules, the distribution data that is created when transactions are posted and the data, are stored in a “xxDISTcc” file/table. Where xx is the module (“AR”, “AP”, “PR”) and “cc” is the company ID – APDIST02 would be the AP distribution file for company 02. (In several Manufacturing modules the data is created on demand by running a “generate distributions” function.) Whenever you post vouchers or pay checks in AP or when you post invoices or receive cash in AR you are updating that module’s repository of distribution transactions. For people without the GL module this is the primary and only source of GL data. For those who do have GL, these data files can be considered a holding tank pending moving the data into the GL.

A number of take-aways from this that are useful:

- a) There are as many sources of distribution data as there are PBS modules that create them. This is why the interface program in GL “sucks” the data out of each of these sub-ledgers and has a menu of the modules from which you select which one you are going to interface to:





- b) The interface process presents a potential problem which is: since the data is being read out of a sub-ledger file, what stops you from accidentally" interfacing the same transactions more than once? The answer is that as the interface process proceeds, and once the individual transactions are in the General Ledger, the program marks these transactions as "interfaced". To be specific, rerunning the interface process again with the same cut-off date will produce no transactions for the GL since it will ignore those that have already been interfaced. This also means that if you decide to do more than one interface to the GL per month (and many companies do this), at the beginning of the month you can set the cut-off date to be the current month-end date (e.g., 08/31/23) and continue to use the same date repeatedly through the month.
- c) Once they have been interfaced, the data is used as the equivalent of you having hand-entered a set of transactions into the Distribution Entry function. This means that like most transactions entered into PBS, there is an Enter, Edit and Post cycle. The important implication here is that after interfacing you can go in and edit transactions. For example, if a description field could be improved, you can simply edit it before posting. There is a limitation here because as with the rest of PBS, certain fields are considered key fields (in both senses of the term) and these fields cannot be edited. The fix for this is to take a screen shot of the screen, delete the "bad" transaction and then add it back in with the appropriate data changed. For distributions, the two fields that can't be changed are the account number and the distribution date.

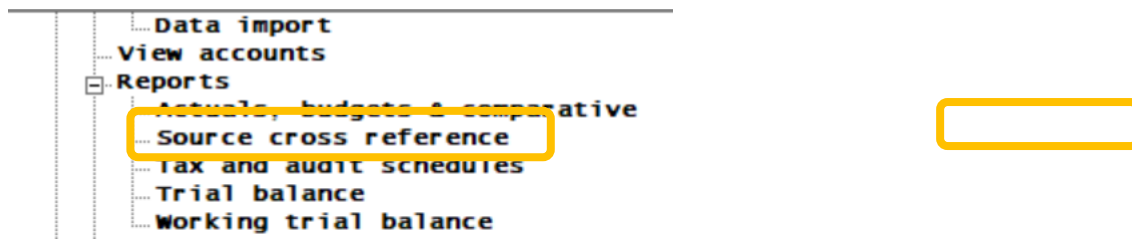
One additional important point is that there are occasions for example, when the wrong distribution account or distribution date was entered as part of the sub-ledger transaction. Since the sub-ledgers have very little to do with either of these pieces of data, you can interface them into the GL and correct them at this time in the General Ledger. By the same token, out-of-period transactions can be fixed in this way. Although this does not "correct" the transaction in the history files of the sub-ledger, this should be of no or little consequence.

Posting these distribution transactions does the typical "PBS thing" i.e., a GL Distribution Journal report is produced, the transactions are moved into the main General Ledger file, and then when that is done, the transactions in the interface file are deleted (to avoid double posting).

- d) Occasionally the data in a sub-ledger distribution file "goes bad" – the debits don't equal the credits. While the interface will work i.e., the data will be transferred into the GL Distribution transaction file, the transaction set will not post because it is out-of-balance. The immediate solution is to determine the offset amount needed to balance the set and then add that (single sided) adjustment to the transaction set and post it to a miscellaneous account that will have only few transactions in it (just to keep things simple and clean). The longer term, solution is to do an analysis to determine what account or accounts are missing from the data. The total of these should add to the value that you posted to the miscellaneous account and therefore once you have done

the analysis, you can reclass the value from the miscellaneous account back into the account(s) that it should have gone to in the first place.

The diagnosis can be helped by using a special feature in the Source Cross Reference report:



Make sure you select the "Journal" option. What this does is to "invert" the list of the transactions in the GL file so that, instead of being sequenced by distribution account and distribution date, the transactions are sorted by posting batch i.e., by journal. This will in effect reproduce the posting batches and each batch should have a zero balance.

Since most GL's contain a large number of transactions you probably want to take steps to limit the range of the report. Recommendation – select the range of journal types from the list below limiting the range of types to a pair that covers the batches that are out of balance, e.g., select start: AP and end AK to select vouchers and payments but ignore adjustment and voids.

A screenshot of a report configuration form. At the top, there is a dropdown menu for 'Fiscal year' set to '2011'. Below this are several fields: 'Print in order of' with a dropdown menu set to 'Source'; 'Starting source' with a dropdown menu set to 'Source'; 'Ending source' with a text box containing '"Last"'; 'Starting journal #' with a text box containing '"First"'; and 'Ending journal #' with a text box containing '"Last"'. The 'Starting source' dropdown menu is open, showing 'Journal #' as an option.

Starting source	"First"	GJ	Distribution journal	
Ending source	"Last"	SJ	Standard journal	
Starting journal #	"First"	ML	General journal	
Ending journal #	"Last"	AR	A/R invoices	
Starting date	"Earliest"	CJ	A/R Cash receipts & returned checks	
Ending date	"Latest"	MC	Miscellaneous charges	
Title of report	SOURCE CROSS REFERENCE REPORT		FC	Finance charges
		AP	A/P vouchers	
		AJ	A/P adjustments	
		AK	A/P checks	
		AV	A/P voided checks	
		PO	Purchase price adjustments	
		PR	Payroll checks	
		PM	Manual payroll	
		IC	Inventory entries	
		JC	Job cost entries	
		JB	Job billing entries	
		TB	Time sheet entries	
		CR	Check reconciliation distributions	

Also, use the most restrictive date range that, again, will cover the range of dates in the batches. If this is a once-a-month, month end interface that has gone bad then there is no choice but to choose first to last for the journal types and first of month, to last of month for the dates. However, if you create the report to PDF, it doesn't really matter if the report length is 10 or 100 pages.

Fiscal year	2011
Print in order of	Journal #
Starting source	"First"
Ending source	"Last"
Starting journal #	AP
Ending journal #	ML
Starting date	07/01/2011
Ending date	07/31/2011
Title of report	Sample Xref by Journal

Below is a sample of the report; in this case just one batch. In the typical case there can be many. Note that the transactions have been grouped by Journal number and that journal totaled. This means that you can easily see whether a batch is in-balance or not. And frequently examining the transactions that are present will tell you what transaction(s) is/are missing. For example, in an AP posting batch you might see all or most of the expense side distributions but missing some expenses as well as the Credit to AP. From your posting report you should be able to figure out what transactions need to be added by the methods described above.

Sample Xref by Journal

Period: 07/01/11 to 07/31/11 Fiscal year: 2011

In order by journal # Starting source: "First" Starting journal #: AK Starting date: 07/01/11
 Ending source: "Last" Ending journal #: ML Ending date: 07/31/11

Report location :C:\Business\Passport\V12.07.06-vix\RWWRK\13250644.pdf

Acct-#	Description	Trans date	Amount	Reference	Document-#	Source
Journal-#: AK10005763						
1000-000	Cash account #13557-000	07/28/11	11.67	CR Vermont Metal Products	11337	AP
1000-000	Cash account #13557-000	07/28/11	636.01	CR Vermont Metal Products	11337	AP
1000-000	Cash account #13557-000	07/28/11	1,200.00	CR Vermont Metal Products	11337	AP
1000-000	Cash account #13557-000	07/28/11	245.00	Vermont Metal Products	11337	AP
1000-000	Cash account #13557-000	07/28/11	1,789.57	CR Absolute Banking Tech	11338	AP
2000-000	Accounts payable	07/28/11	12.00	Vermont Metal Products	11337	AP
2000-000	Accounts payable	07/28/11	654.00	Vermont Metal Products	11337	AP
2000-000	Accounts payable	07/28/11	1,200.00	Vermont Metal Products	11337	AP
2000-000	Accounts payable	07/28/11	250.00	CR Vermont Metal Products	11337	AP
2000-000	Accounts payable	07/28/11	1,789.57	Absolute Banking Tech	11338	AP
4050-000	Discounts allowed	07/28/11	.33	CR Vermont Metal Products	11337	AP
4050-000	Discounts allowed	07/28/11	17.99	CR Vermont Metal Products	11337	AP
4050-000	Discounts allowed	07/28/11	5.00	Vermont Metal Products	11337	AP
13 entries this journal		Journal totals:	3,905.57			
			3,905.57	CR Balance:		.00
Journal-#: AP10005759						
1000-000	Cash account #13557-000	07/22/11	147.00	CR Vermont Metal Products	5466	AP
4050-000	Discounts allowed	07/22/11	3.00	CR Vermont Metal Products	5466	AP
5020-200	Purchases - tools	07/22/11	150.00	Vermont Metal Products	24512	AP
3 entries this journal		Journal totals:	150.00			
			150.00	CR Balance:		.00
2 journals	16 entries total	Grand totals:	4,055.57			
			4,055.57	CR Balance:		.00

-- End of report --

In the case of many pages of report you can use your PDF program (Acrobat or whatever) to search for "Balance:" and this will allow a very quick scan to see the out of balance batch or batches.

- e) Some other accounting systems automatically post the GL transactions into the General Ledger, so there could be a question – "Why does PBS require this extra interface and post step?". First, this is a deliberate aspect of the design of the PBS system. The point here is that since there will always be some level or frequency of getting bad data (accounts wrong, dates wrong, descriptions inaccurate) into the distribution transactions, what is better: For those systems that post immediately, having to take "bad" transactions already posted to the GL directly from the sub-ledgers and, after finding the bad data, correcting it/them through a series of adjustments; versus , doing the interface step and interfacing with the possibility of correcting any errors (as above) prior to posting. It is obvious the latter is better.

Two last points to share:

- f) If you look at the report listing above, for each posting batch, the header includes "Journal-#:" This of course is the journal number of the batch that follows. However, the numeric value of the journal number corresponds to the PBS report number of the posting report that created this data. The two-letter prefix indicates the module and transaction type. For example, "AP" is an AP voucher entry "AK" is a batch of AP checks. These prefixes are in fact the list given above as part of the selection screen for running the by-journal-number report. In other words, the Journal number consists of a simple two-character batch type followed by the 7 digits of the report number. Providing you print all your posting reports as Print to Disk, you will have the posting report backup for any transactions that are in your General Ledger. This provides the convenience of being able to quickly determine, from the Trial Balance or Account views functions, the report number to access the posting report.
- g) The xxDISTcc file mentioned above contains essentially the same information as the ultimate data that is posted to the GL. This is not literally true but from a practical point of view these two sets of data (the xxDIST file in the AR or AP app and the GL itself) duplicate each other. Therefore, there is no real sense in keeping the xxDIST data indefinitely since it is contained in the GL. On the other hand, until you have closed the month in the General Ledger with all of the attendant sets of reconciliations and work, you really don't know if the data from the sub-ledgers was accurate or if there are missing entries. In addition, depending on the setup of your GL, your system may be consolidating data into the General Ledger so that for some accounts there are no details; just consolidated, summary values. For all of these cases, it is useful to keep the xxDIST file for some period until you know that everything in the GL is OK. So, my recommendation is to keep the xxDIST data for at least a month and potentially several. But whatever the number of months you choose you should, for efficiency's sake, purge the one or more xxDIST files (one for each module) each month or each quarter for any data older than your 1 or 2 or 3 month "keep" period. For most modules the purging of the distribution file for that module is a selection option in the Report/Distributions to GL report.