

STAY IN THE PINK

HELPS YOU

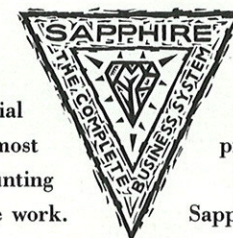
At last there's a program that enables you to understand all the financial workings of your company — even if your knowledge of accountancy doesn't extend much further than terms like "bank", "balance" and "overdraft".

The total package is called Sapphire.

It has the most powerful relational data-base of any accountancy program available on the Apple Macintosh or PC platform.

This means all your different files are fully connected, so the information in each is updated automatically and instantly.

This allows you to know your company's current financial position in less than a minute. That's a job that would take most companies, whether large or small, with their outdated accounting practices, a minimum of two or three days of labour intensive work.



Sapphire also gives you a simple analysis of your statement of position, including: opening bank; clients' balances; vendors' balances; bank balance for account; deposits; withdrawals and closing bank balances. All within seconds without leaving your office.

Unlike other accountancy packages, Sapphire was designed specifically for the Macintosh. So once you know the basics, you'll find Sapphire surprisingly easy to use.

The package costs between \$575 and \$1500, depending on your needs. A small price to pay when you see the details of what this program can do for your business.

So why not arrange for a free personal demonstration at your local Sapphire dealer, by calling 61 2 699 8099.

HUGE

COUNTING ON THE MAC

Where in the past,
cleaning the bathroom

may have seemed
preferable to
confronting your
financial situation,
Mac accounting
packages not only clean
up your accounts, but
also offer exciting ways
to put your house in
order.

By Pru Donovan

The Macintosh, renowned for its graphical user interface and its emphasis on using clearly recognisable visual clues to guide the computer user, has prompted accounting software to follow suit. By presenting information in a visual way through the use of graphs, and by adding such visual aids as card file indexes, multiple windows and pop-up reference screens, accounting systems on the Macintosh can be used by those with little or no accounting experience. More than that, the possibilities for money management and control have been expanded.

MAGNEWS 31

FREE MAC CLASSIFIEDS INSIDE MACNEWS

The Australian Macintosh Business Magazine

November 1992 Issue 42

\$4.95 NZ \$6.95 (inc GST)

MACS MADE TO MOVE

Full details on Apple's latest releases

Programs you can account on

DTP for schools

Collectable clip art

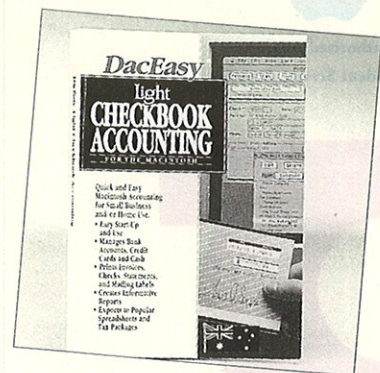
Reviews:

Now Utilities 4.0

Instant QuickKeys

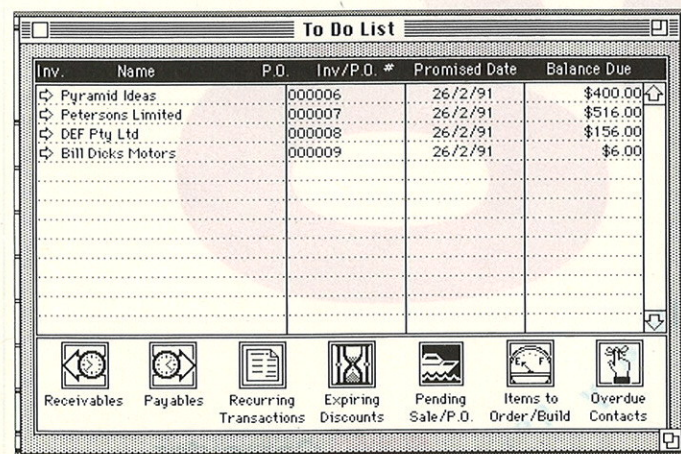
APPLE SLASHES PRICES!

New price list inside



Present Value analysis, and Quicken will soon be incorporating an Australian Taxpack Extension which corresponds question by question to the Australian Taxpack.

In line with its flexible approach to accounting, Sapphire can be linked to a wide range of other programs including real estate management, delivery run management, payroll and telemarketing. And there's no excuse anymore for forgetting your Mum's birthday when you have MYOB's three-year business calendar available on-screen.



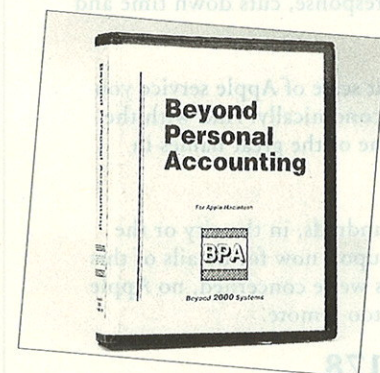
MYOB's Pending Sale/P.O. To-Do List

do? Is it for putting your personal finances in order, for monitoring your business, or both? Given the relatively low cost of packages designed for home and small business finances, the optimum solution may be to have one accounting package for your business and a smaller package for home use.

How many people will be sitting at a terminal inputting or accessing financial information? What would you like your accounting package to do other than just accounting? What computer equipment do you currently have, and how much are you prepared to spend?

Single or multi-user

If you are a small business in one location, or wish to track your personal finances on your Mac at home, a single-user system is all you'll need. But if your long term plans include the possibility of growth, with a high volume of transactions requiring your accounting to be sectioned (for example, one person for payables; one for receivables; one for payroll; and so on) then a multi-user environment becomes essential.



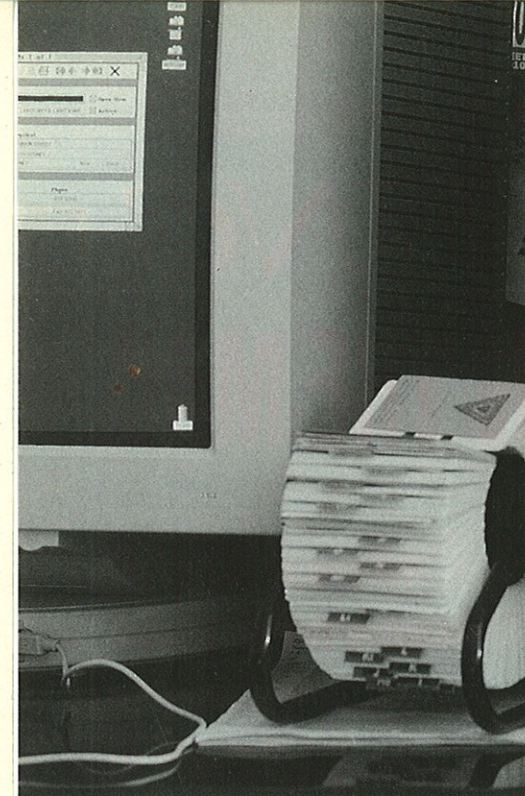
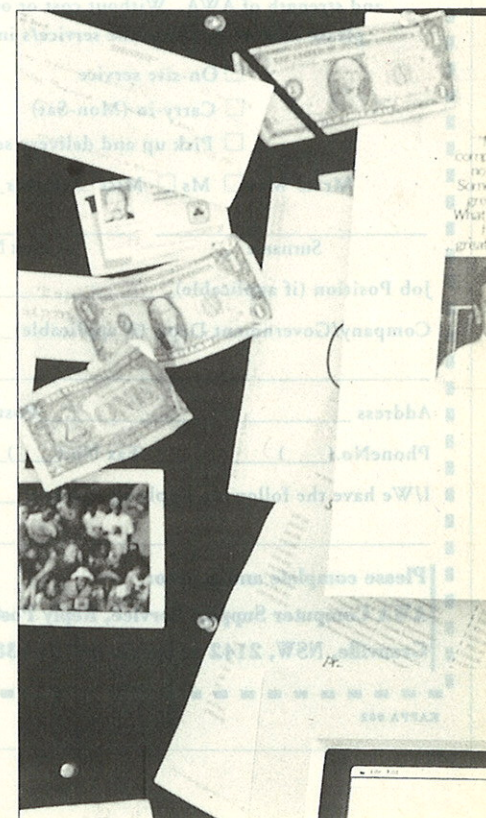
Accounting capability

You might simply want to reconcile your home cheque accounts and credit cards, and not be concerned with debits, credits and accounting procedures. Packages such as BPA, MacMoney, Quicken, and Sapphire's low-end version have been specifically designed with this in mind.

However, if your business is a reasonable size, it becomes important for the package to conform to accepted accounting principles. The package should enable, at the very minimum, the output of profit and loss statements and balance sheets, with decent audit trails and a comprehensive general ledger to keep your accountant and/or auditor happy. Equally important is the need to provide more detailed financial analysis information on how the business is going, to enable more informed decision making.

Transaction types and number

The type of business will define, among other things, the focus for component needs within the accounting system. If you're a retailer, you'll need sales and inventory; if a manufacturer — purchases, sales, inventory, and inventory building; and if you're a sales and service company — sales, job costing, and time billing.



On the operational level, accounting packages fall into two main types — batch systems (DataCare; Fiscal; Great Plains; Jewel), and non-batch systems — Beyond Personal Accounting (BPA); Custom Accounting (Custom); DacEasy Light; MacMoney; MYOB; Quicken; and Sapphire. (BPA and Sapphire are exceptions here in that they also have the capacity to operate in batch mode.)

Accounting is a batch

In a batch system, like transactions are input in groups. The benefit is that each batch can be checked for accuracy before posting to the General Ledger (GL). The GL is the document which shows auditors where every dollar has gone. Such packages tend to operate logically in a more structured step-by-step, screen-by-screen fashion (that is, only one screen can be open on the desktop at once) and also tend to be more keyboard-oriented.

In some respects, the benefit of these systems is their inflexibility. There is only one path to accomplish a particular task, and there is no room for confusion or getting lost within the package itself. If you are after a sequence-oriented system for processing accounting data, such as in the case of larger companies needing multi-user capability, then a batch system should be considered.

Another difference between packages is that some utilise separate database software to store information, as opposed to being

entirely written in a programming language. Sapphire, for example, uses 4th Dimension Runtime, and Jewel, BPA and Custom use Omnis. This means, if you are poor like me, and only possess a Mac with a 68000 bit processor, you'll notice a slower response time in these packages compared with the others.

New look accounting

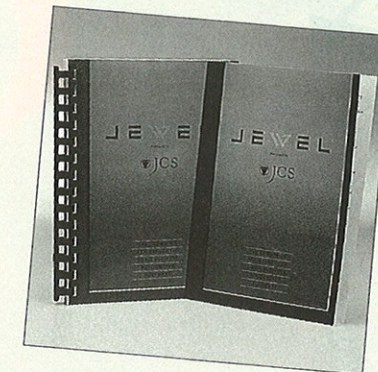
The new look means accounting packages now don't just add up numbers. MYOB, for example, automatically sorts through all pending transactions, and presents the user with 'to-do' list screens, a definite advantage for promoting a good night's sleep.

For home users, packages such as MacMoney and Quicken open by leading you into accounting with the simple task of writing cheques and reconciling credit cards.

If your business is product sales, you may want a system enabling your salespeople to input and access on-screen information detailing customer data, contact conversations, and resulting sales. MYOB is such a system and might give your business an edge over those who rely on memory and phone numbers on scraps of paper. MYOB has a card file component, which can include personal cards as well as cards covering customers, suppliers, and employees. The card file also incorporates the facility for automatic telephone dialling via modem.

Within Great Plains you can create your own macros for working down well-used paths. For those who won't plan unless pushed, MacMoney has screens for loan and retirement planning and future value goal analysis, which make a lot more sense to me than any explanations I've ever heard from a superannuation salesperson.

BPA has the facility to forecast daily account balances for checking and forward planning of daily cash flows and Net



```

General Ledger                                The FISCAL Accounting System                                SMGR 27-Jul-92

```

```

    Transactions                                Dissections
1. Post to Ledger                                12. Modify Dissections
2. General Journals                            13. Configure Tables
3. Accruals/Prepayments
4. Post Reversal

    Reports
    Ledger Accounts                                14. Dissection Details
5. Account Enquiry
6. Change Account
7. Modify Budgets
8. Add New Account
9. Activate Account
10. Rename Account
11. Parameters
15. Account Budgets
16. Chart of Accounts
17. Trial Balance
18. Ledger Details
19. View Financials
20. Financial Reports

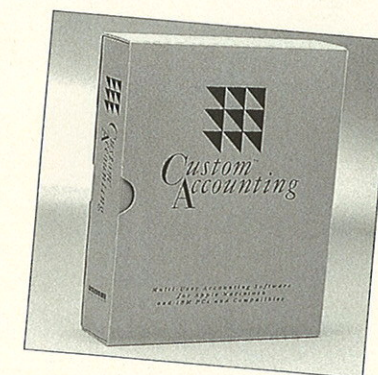
```

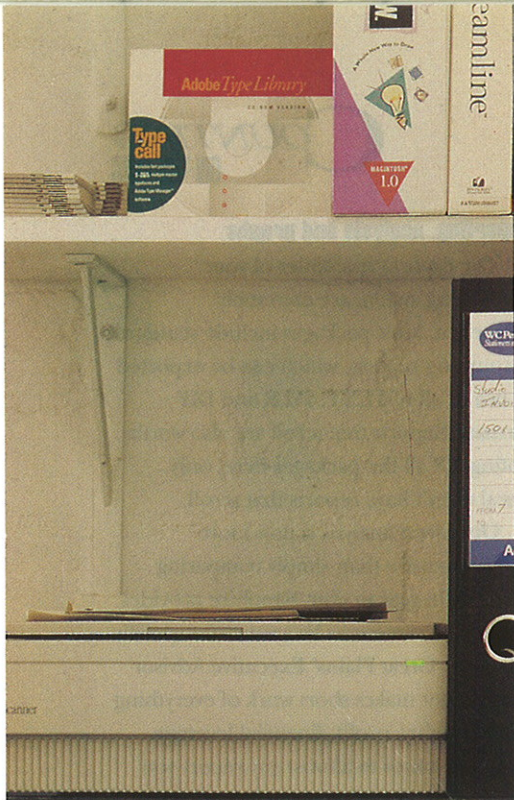
```

Please enter selection or 'Q' to quit :    [ ]

```

Fiscal: An example batch system menu screen.





Forms

Have you ever wished you could customise on-screen your invoices, cheques, statements, purchase orders, or mailing labels and the like, without resorting to exporting data to another piece of software? DataCare, Fiscal, Great Plains, and MYOB allow for on-screen customisation of various forms. DacEasy Light and MacMoney's Invoicit module give you customised invoices and statements, and Quicken has customised cheques. The method differs from package to package. MYOB is probably the only package utilising the Mac to its fullest, in that each form is treated pictorially and gives you the option to add pictures, boxes, lettering, change fonts, and move items around in full interactive mode.

Alternatively, you may need to use pre-printed multi-part stationery. All packages except BPA, MacMoney, Quicken and DacEasy Light currently utilise off-the-shelf stationery, although pre-printed forms are planned for use with Light.

Import capability

If customer/supplier/employee/inventory/general ledger master lists can be imported, the time taken to transfer to the new system should in theory be reduced. Great Plains has an edition of

ClearAccess, import/export software providing for the creation of custom solutions in applications such as Excel, Wingz, Resolve, 4th Dimension, HyperCard, Spinnaker Plus (including Oracle Card) and SuperCard. Sapphire, DataCare, Custom, BPA and

Quicken can all import certain files on set-up, providing those files are in a compatible format.

Accounting specifics

Having established your overall needs, the next step is to look a little further into how each accounting component works from within. If cleaning the bathroom is becoming enticing, take a five minute breather.

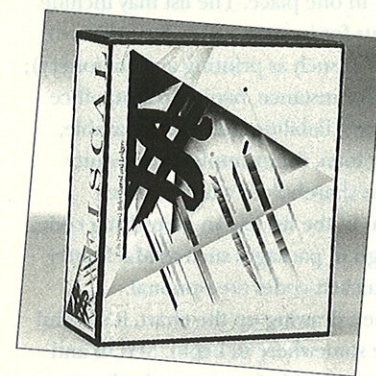
General Ledger (GL)

Normally, initialising an accounting system requires establishing a chart of accounts. The chart of accounts (referred to as 'category list' in MacMoney and Quicken) is a list of accounts, in which the results of all monetary transactions finally appear in one place. The list may include accounts for income (sales, for instance); expenses (such as printing and stationery); assets (for instance, bank account, office furniture); liabilities (accounts payable, and car loan, for example); and equity (such as shareholder's funds). Each account in the list has an identifying code, although in packages such as MacMoney and Quicken codes are optional.

When drawing up the chart, it's useful to have somewhere to begin. MYOB and DataCare provide four example charts covering general, manufacturing, retail, and service; Light and MacMoney have two — personal and business; Fiscal, Sapphire, BPA and Jewel have one all-purpose chart. Quicken simply gives you an example list of expense and income categories: in contrast, and in keeping with its concentration on medium to large business, Great Plains has 45 sample charts covering 15 different industries for each of a sole proprietor, corporation or partnership.

Most businesses operates on a monthly basis, so most accounting software could be expected to divide the year into 12 periods. However, MYOB and Great Plains provide for an additional 13th period, and DataCare an extra six periods, to allow for year-end adjustments. Jewel has 24 periods so you can compare two years on-screen, and MacMoney gives you four previous and four future years of 12 periods each to play with. Sapphire has up to 30 periods, or 26 periods with one month before close off. Quicken doesn't actually define specific periods, but reports can be output per week if need be.

Input of at least one year's historical data is usually standard, except for Quicken and DataCare, although DataCare does allow for input of aged payables and receivables history. Sapphire caters for up to 10 years' historical data and Great Plains and BPA both give you unlimited years of historical data entry.



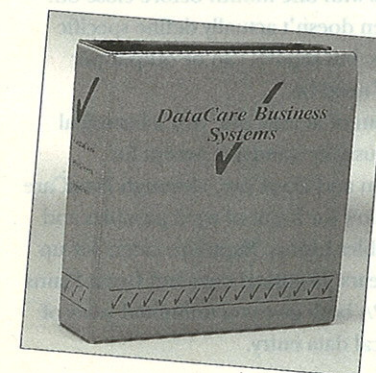
It is also important to consider the overall size of your transaction base. Most packages are limited only by available hard disk space. MacMoney is limited to a maximum of 6000 transactions overall (that is, 500 transactions per month). In contrast, BPA allows for 80,000 transactions; Quicken, 65,534 transactions per data file; and Fiscal, 32,000 per file. In practice, these limits would only be restrictive for larger companies.

Pop-up help and multiple screens

Pop-up or in-screen reference listings which respond to a keystroke or the first few letters or numbers of a name, (such as customer/supplier lists, general ledger codes, and inventory item lists) mean you seldom need refer to papers littered on your desk. BPA, Custom, MYOB, DacEasy Light, Fiscal, Great Plains and Sapphire are all a joy in this regard. MacMoney also has pop-up screens, but it requires an extra step to pull them up. Jewel will be incorporating pop-up screens in a future version.

Utilising the power of the Mac's desktop operation, some packages (including BPA, MYOB, MacMoney and Quicken) allow multiple windows to be opened simultaneously. Sapphire can recall the last set of inquiry windows, and MacMoney can remember your last window positions. The benefit of having such ready access to multiple windows is not only functional, as references and the like are available close at hand, but also psychological — you have the impression you are in control of the system, not vice versa. One thing to watch for, however: the infamous 'Apple MacDanish effect' where you end up with layer upon layer of accounting windows cluttering your screen.

On-screen help is a feature Mac users have come to expect. DacEasy Light has a 'why' button which will explain your error, or what you've missed in entering a transaction, while DataCare hand-holds you through each step in entering a transaction. However, neither have the topic-by-topic help lists such as those found in BPA, Fiscal, MYOB, Great Plains, MacMoney and Quicken. Both Jewel and Sapphire are planning to incorporate a help function in a future version.



COUNTING ON THE MAC

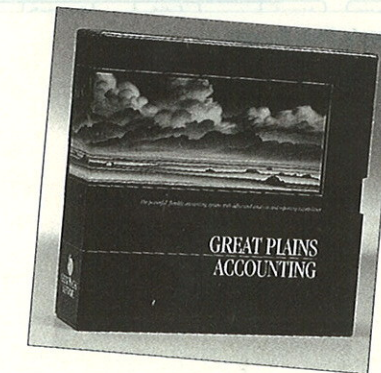
Reporting, analysis and graphs

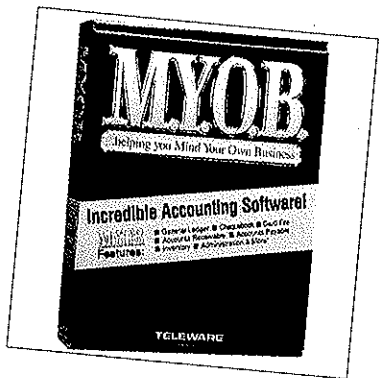
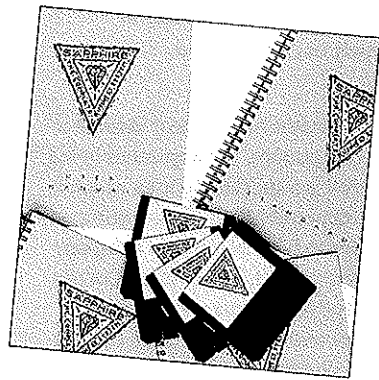
The report capabilities of your accounting system are extremely important. Most packages include standard accounting reports, which can be exported in two or all of TEXT, SYLK and DIF formats. Reports that scroll are also worth noting. Of all the packages here, only Fiscal didn't have reports that scroll.

On-screen analysis is now more comprehensive than simply comparing profit from year to year. Sapphire provides for custom screens to be written for specific purposes. Great Plains' Executive Advisor component makes short work of everything from liquidity, profit, financial leverage and stock ratios to almost any report you might dream possible given the purchase of a report writer.

Of note also are MYOB's cash flow worksheet, which analyses your cash needs on the basis of existing data and your own projections; Jewel's freight reconciliation and sales tax commission analysis screens; Fiscal's sales area reporting and stock analyses; and BPA's forward cashflow and NPV analysis.

For those who would rather just look at the pictures, on-screen graphs are a treat. Take a screen-capture of DataCare's sales area enquiry or MYOB's on-screen pie chart graphs of balance sheet information, sales or profit analyses, and management reports become easy on the eye. Sapphire can graph your General Ledger balances as you proceed, and enables graph creation on the run. Fiscal graphs are unique as they allow for entry of your own graph data, and Great Plains has so many graphs you would probably never need to employ a financial analyst.





Payable (AP) component. The first type, typified by DacEasy Light, requires a separate GL account for each supplier. The alternative provides for input of suppliers and supplier information to a list separate from the GL. The latter is a definite advantage if you have a significant supplier base, because it results in keeping your GL at a manageable size. A separate supplier list also enables the creation of an aged payables report — a report listing payments due divided into 30, 60 and 90 days (or over 60 days).

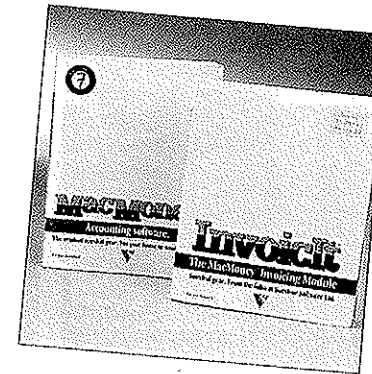
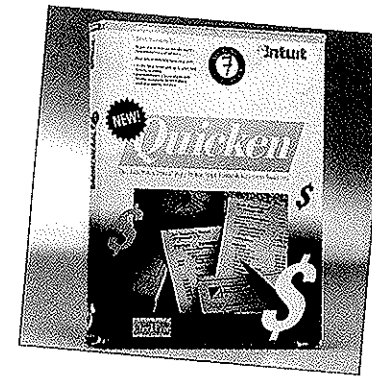
Special payables features include MacMoney's reminder system on start-up, which prompts the user that payments are due. Light, MacMoney and Quicken have credit card components, specifically designed for tracking and reconciling credit card transactions. However, since these programs are geared towards the smaller user, Light only allows expense allocation to five GL codes, Quicken to five, and MacMoney to eight. Of note is DataCare's ability to allocate each supplier

to a particular user-defined group, so that automatic payments and reports can be generated for any or all groups. In addition, invoices can be allocated to different purchase types for analysis.

Accounts Receivable (Debtors)

As in the AP logic described above, there are two analogous types of Accounts Receivable (AR) — one requires a GL account for each customer, the other provides for a separate list. Similar advantages apply regarding the GL and obtaining aged receivables reports.

Invoicing and statements are available in all packages, except in those packages aimed more at the personal use market such as Quicken and BPA, although BPA can report transactions by customer. Point-of-sale invoicing is also available in all packages, except MacMoney's Invoicit, BPA and Quicken. Computerised cheques are an option in all packages except BPA, Fiscal, and Custom. Custom also creates overdue letters.



For double checks or learning as you go, it's handy to immediately see the debit and credit result of any transaction you enter. One click can achieve this in MYOB. In other packages you either see the result as you input (most batch systems), or you need to pull up a report. MacMoney however, requires a search through the chart of accounts to see the results.

When you realise you've made a mistake after having posted the entry to the General Ledger, strict accounting procedure requires a journal entry to reverse and correct the mistake. You might also want to use journal entries for accruals (that is, taking account of income or expenses this month, even though they actually occur in the future) or for reconciling petty cash. If so, a limit on the number of accounts you can enter in any one journal can be irritating and time-consuming when inputting data. DacEasy Light limits you to five accounts at any one time. MacMoney limits you to one. In Quicken, double-entry system adjustments

can only be done by changing the balance of the particular accounts.

All packages provide for a continuous GL, even after closing accounting periods. This is important because it provides for ease of auditing. Period closing is a control issue in accounting. It means transactions in a closed period cannot subsequently be changed. If there is no period close, it can leave the way open for either negligent or unscrupulous accounting. In a large business, if changes were made it would no doubt give auditors the horrors trying to work out which set of financials represented a true and fair picture of the company's position at any point in time. MYOB doesn't have a true period close and neither does MacMoney, Quicken, or BPA. MYOB, however, has the facility to disallow entries to previous periods at your discretion.

Accounts Payable (Debtors)

In the accounting systems reviewed here there are two types of Accounts

General Ledger	GL Operating Divs/Depts	Accounts Payable (Creditors)	Accounts Receivable (Debtors)	Inventory	Payroll	Job Costing Time Billing	Budgeting	Import/Export capability	Self customised 1. Forms 2. Reports	On-screen Graphs
Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Both	1. No 2. No	No
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Both	1. No 2. No	No
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Both	1. Yes 2. No	Yes
Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Export only	1. Yes 2. No	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Both	1. Yes 2. Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Export only	1. No 2. No	No
Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Export only	1. No 2. No	Yes
Yes	No	No	Yes using Invoicit	No	No	No	Yes	Export only	1. No 2. Limited	Yes
Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Export only	1. Yes 2. Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Both	1. Yes 2. Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Both	1. Cheques 2. Limited	No

Program	Supplier	RRP	User support/contract	Off-the-shelf purchase	Where Developed	Target Market	Multi-User Capability	Multi-Company Consolidation	Mac Hardware A. Min. RAM B. Min. disk space
Beyond Personal Accounting	BPA Systems 09 454 5006	\$295	FOC-24hr 7 days support	No Mail Order	Australia	Personal to Small Business	No	No	A. 1 Mbyte B. 2 Mbyte
Custom Accounting	Pacific Database 03 525 6954	\$975	\$350 per year	Yes	Australia	Small to Medium Business	Yes	No	A. 1 Mbyte B. 2 Mbyte
DataCare	DataCare Marketing 002 345 415	Single user-GL, AP & AR-\$2085	FOC phone support	No	Australia	Small to Medium Business	Yes	No	A. 1 Mbyte B. 800Kbyte
Fiscal	Q-TEC Software 02 389 8007	\$1,740 (excl. Payroll)	FOC-1 mth, \$240 per year	Yes	Australia	Small to Medium Business	No	No	A. 1 Mbyte B. 5 Mbyte
Great Plains	Great Plains S/ware 02 415 2125	Single user-GL, AP & AR-\$3680	Qualified Consultants	Yes	US	Medium to Large Business	Yes	Yes	A. 1Mbyte B. 10 Mbyte
Jewel	Jorgen Computer Services 03 592 7500	Single user-GL, AP & AR-\$2299	\$950 per year	Yes	Australia	Medium to Large Business	Yes	No	A. 1 Mbyte B. 10 Mbyte
Light Accounting	DacEasy Australia 07 252 3992	\$175	45 days FOC phone support	Yes	US	Personal to Medium Business	No	No B. 800 Kbyte	A. 1 Mbyte
MacMoney & Invoicit	Conexus 02 975 2799	\$169 \$129	FOC support	Yes	US	Personal to Small Business	No	No	A. 512Kbyte B. Optional
MYOB	Data Tech 02 955 3611	\$495	30 day FOC \$120 per year	Yes	US	Small to Medium Business	No	No	A. 1 Mbyte B. 2 Mbyte
Sapphire	John Adams Studio 02 699 8099	Single User-GL, AP & AR-\$520 +runtime-\$380	Support Consultants	Yes	New Zealand	Small to Large Business	Yes	No	A. 2.5 Mbyte B. 12 Mbyte
Quicken	Reckon Software 02 550 2666	\$129	\$50 per year	Yes	US	Personal to Small Business	No	No	A. 1 Mbyte B. 800 Kbyte