SYNC Billing

User Documentation

Version 0.3.7

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Contents

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Note from Sage

redware research ltd are licensed Sage developers.

SYNC Billing was created using development software belonging to The Sage Group plc or one or more of its subsidiaries at North Park, Newcastle upon Tyne NE13 9AA (Tel: 0191 294 3000).

Introduction

SYNC Billing is a software utility for automatic uploading of invoices into Sage Line 50. The system is designed to be very flexible and interfaces with a large variety of data sources and can be controlled from any windows application that supports office automation.

The Billing process can be adapted in many ways to suit the needs of your business. The accounting department have full control of the process and can define the best way to incorporate automatic billing into your workflow.

Some examples of how SYNC Billing can be used include:

- Integration with your own systems including e-commerce sites to upload customers and invoices into Sage.
- Regular monthly invoicing to customers requiring variable amounts each month can be managed with a single spreadsheet containing a list of all monthly customers. Simply update the amount in the spreadsheet and then upload the invoices monthly. New customers can be added with a separate spreadsheet with SYNC Billing or added directly into Sage.
- Invoice data entry for repeat business where customers regularly order items can be efficiently managed by adding orders into a spreadsheet and uploading regularly into the accounting database.
- Jobs which require additions of items to the invoice as the job proceeds can be managed with a spreadsheet managed by the project manager or foreman who ensures that items are added to the job spreadsheet as each expense is incurred. The spreadsheet is emailed to the bookkeeper for automatic entry of a single invoice.
- A field sales force or salespeople in different offices, or working from home, originate invoices which need to be entered into a central accounting database. Each office maintains a spreadsheet to send to the bookkeeper for uploading at regular intervals.

The workflow process generally involves the accountant or bookkeeper maintaining amounts in a spreadsheet and uploading the invoices periodically. A separate spreadsheet is maintained for data entry of new customers if required. The software can also be used to create blank spreadsheets which are maintained by other originators who periodically email the invoices to the bookkeeper who uploads the invoices into the accounting package.

A validation process occurs before the upload so that any invalid account and product references can be corrected or discarded before uploading. All invoices are uploaded as product invoices into the Invoicing module of Sage Line 50 and can be reviewed or deleted before printing and updating onto the sales ledger. The bookkeeper has full control of the invoicing process once the invoice has been loaded into Sage.

Redware publish a companion product – **`SYNC Accounting`** – which extracts customer history and invoice documents to a web site for use by all authorised staff. Consider purchasing this software to complete the feedback loop so that the originators of the invoice can see the final invoice without bothering the accounts department. More information at **http://www.redware.com/sync**.

SYNC Billing software can be controlled by IT developers and programmers to interface with your existing systems. Please contact redware for technical information for controlling the billing software programmatically.

Invoice Data

The billing process requires that a file of invoice items to upload is maintained. The minimum information required for each item is:

- **`ACCOUNT`** - a valid customer account reference.
- **`DTAXPOINT`** – the invoice date.
- **`ITEM`** – an incrementing number to identify the line item.
- **`PRODUCT`** - A valid product reference.
- **`QUANTITY`** – the quantity.

- **`UNIT PRICE`** – the price per unit.

SYNC validates the account and product reference and then proceeds to upload the invoices adding the customer and product data according to the information already entered in the accounting database. The customer address details are taken from the appropriate customer data and the item description, pricing and VAT tax rate is automatically applied from the data held against the product.

Invoices are created as product invoices within Sage and can be reviewed before posting to the sales ledger and appearing in a customer account. This allows the accountant or bookkeeper to change absolutely any information or delete the invoice without causing much disruption in the accounting database. SYNC invoices become like any other invoice originated in Sage and the Sage user can print out and otherwise process SYNC invoices in exactly the same manner as product invoices originated within Sage.

The total price is calculated from the quantity and unit price and VAT is applied according to the tax code allocated to the product in question. The unit price can be omitted and the price taken from the default product pricing in Sage.

> *Note: SYNC Billing does not (yet) support customer specific pricing and extracts just the default price for the customer*

Additional fields are sometimes specified to override the defaults held against the product record:

- **`DESC`** – the item description to override the default product description.
- **`UNITS`** – the units applied to the product (bottle, case etc).
- **`NOMINAL`** – nominal code to override the default nominal code held against the customer record.
- **`DEPARTMENT`** – department name (as set up in the accounting database).

Two additional fields are used during the validation process:

- **`STATUS`** – OK indicates a successful upload. This status flag needs to be cleared to repeat the upload the following month.
- **`MESSAGE`** – any message set by the system.

Customer Data

SYNC Billing can also be used to enter customer data by generating spreadsheet or DBF data files in a similar manner to the Invoice data. This feature is often used where customer information originates in existing systems and new customers can be maintained directly in Sage if required.

Quick Start

Thank you for purchasing or evaluating SYNC Billing. This Quick Start section skips a lot of the detail in the rest of the manual. If you are evaluating the software you can activate your existing installation once you purchase a license as indicated in the following section.

Please remember that this software will alter your accounting data and you need to take a backup of Sage and check Sage after using the software particularly when evaluating. Alternatively, install Sage on a separate machine whilst you are testing the software.

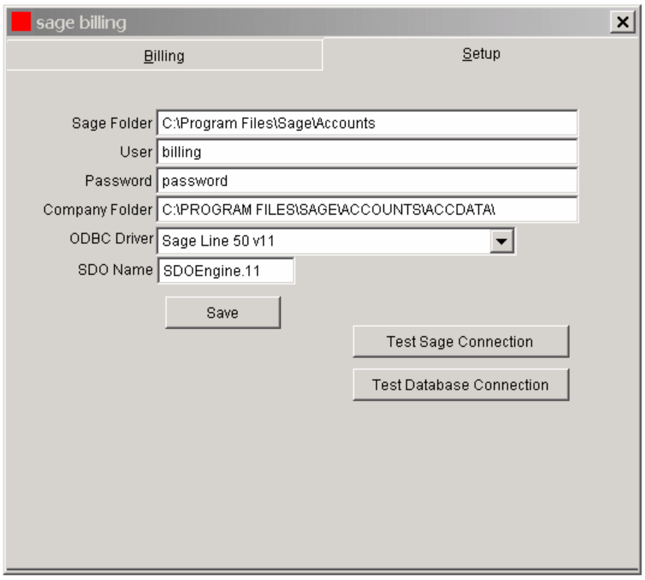
Installation

The installation process is a straightforward Microsoft Windows installation controlled by double clicking on the **`syncbilling-setup.exe`** file which is available either from your installation CD or by downloading from **http://www.redware.com/sync/download.html**.

Installation simply installs the required files into the **`c:\program files\redware\syncbilling`** folder by default and creates a shortcut on the desktop to run the application file **`syncbilling.exe`**.

Setup

See the following section for full details on the setup window.



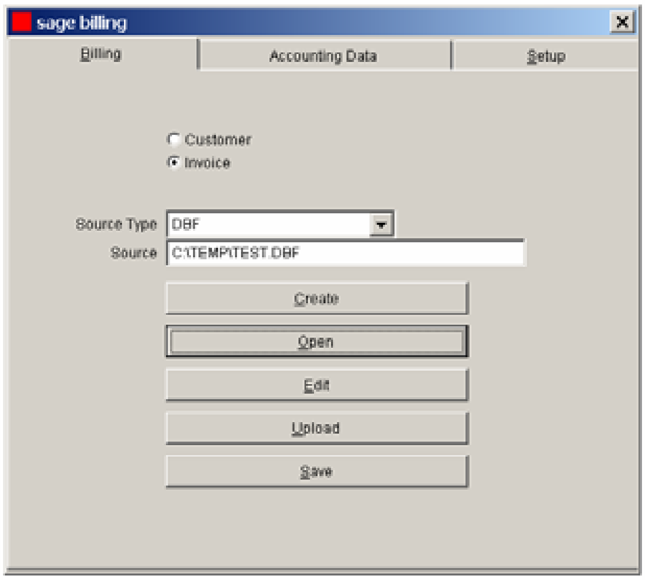
The Sage folder needs to be your local (C: drive) installation folder for Sage and a valid Sage user name and password needs to be specified. Press the **`Test Sage Connection`** button to pop up a list of companies and select one to specify the company folder.

If successful, test the database connection and see the Setup-Troubleshooting section if there are any problems.

Remember to press the **`Save`** button to save your settings.

Create an Invoice File

Select the **`Billing`** page and **`DBF`** as the source type before pressing the **`Create`** button to create a new invoice file. You will be prompted for a new file which you should then see in the **`source`** field.



Specify Invoice Details

Now edit the details you require for invoicing. The minimum fields you must enter are account, product, and quantity. Remember that the **`Accounting Data`** page allows you to view account and product information if you need to lookup a product number for example.

CurInvoice

Account	Dtaxpoint	Item	Product	Quantity
BUS001	12/03/2006	1	CAS001	2.0000
BUS001	12/03/2006	2	KEY001	2.0000
ABS001	13/03/2006	1	CAS001	3.0000

A **`Table`** menu option appears when you edit the data which allows you to add new records with **`CTRL+Y`** or delete records with **`CRTL+T.`** Take care with the following data entry requirements:

- Account and Product must be valid.
- The Item number must be specified for each line. Enter item numbers in sequence when entering more than one line item for an invoice.
- Date is specified on each line but is only read from the first invoice item.
- Blank pricing allows the unit price to be taken from the accounting database.

Upload the Invoices

Once editing is complete, press the **`Upload`** button to load into the accounting database. It is strongly recommended that you take a Sage backup before performing this procedure.

You may **`Edit`** the table again to see the Status and Message fields which indicate success or failure and the invoice number created for you.

Save the Table

If you wish to save the table for reference or to use again, then press the **`Save`** button.

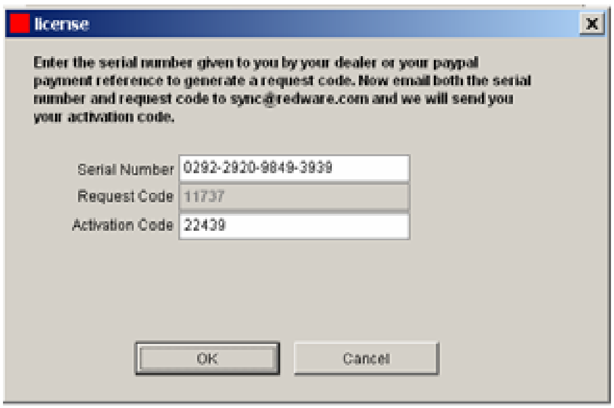
License

You may evaluate redware software products for a period of 30 days after download. Once you have successfully installed and tested the software you will need to purchase a software license from your reseller or directly from redware. You can activate your software without further installation issues using the **License** button on the splash screen that appears when you launch the application.

> *SYNC software is licensed for a single company and a single Sage installation and a single computer. You are best advised to install the software on a machine where Sage is already installed and you will need a new activation code if you want to re-install your software on a different machine.*

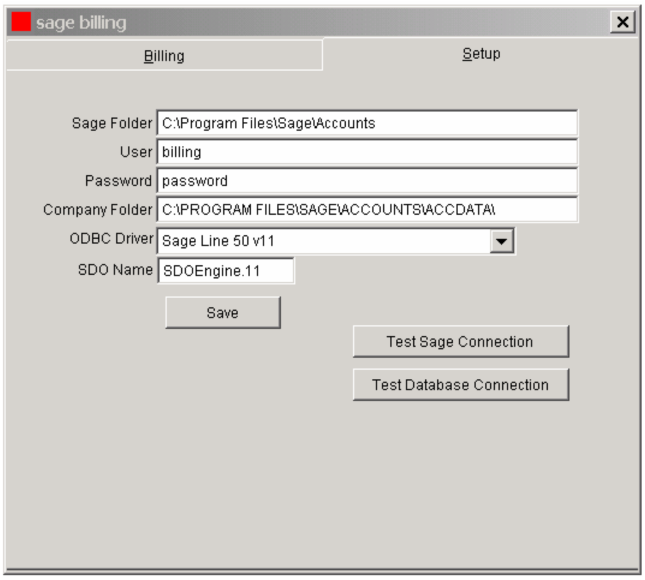
You are presented the license form after pressing the license button on the splash screen. There are three numbers to complete:

- The **serial number** is supplied by your reseller or you may use the receipt identifier created by paypal if you purchased directly from redware (email **sync@redware.com** if you need a serial number).
- The **request code** is generated directly by the system and depends on your serial number and is specific to the machine used for the installation. The software will only run on this machine so please take care to use the appropriate machine when you activate your software. Email redware if you wish to move the application to a different machine.
- Please email the serial number and request code to **sync@redware.com** and we will send you back an **activation code**. Enter this in the appropriate field to activate your software and press OK to save the license details.



Setup

The setup for SYNC Billing is usually performed just once with the results saved to a configuration file - **`SAGEBILLING.INI`**.



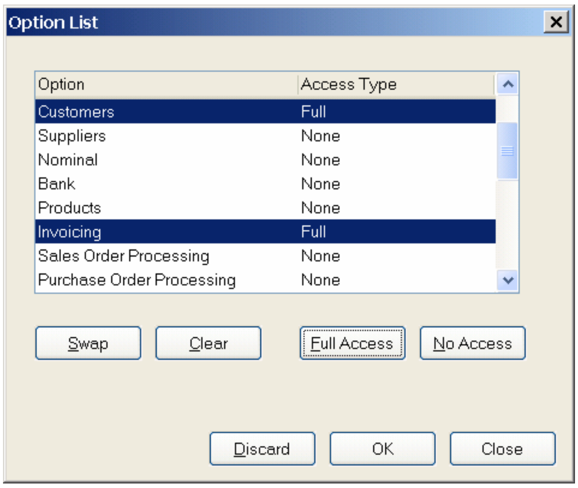
The following information is required:

- Sage application folder where the accounting program has been installed for the local computer. The default for most Sage Line 50 installations is **`c:\program files\sage\accounts`** (do not confuse this with the location of the accouting database which is often on a shared drive).
- The Sage user name for use by the billing program. It is recommended that you create a new user in Sage to allow the upload process to function even if other users are logged into the Sage program.
- The Sage password.
- The company folder is the folder containing the data for the required Sage Company installation (SYNC Billing is licensed for use with a single company). You can leave this blank the first time to be prompted by Sage to select a company but please remember to save the setting.
- The ODBC Driver is automatically selected from your installed drivers and should have been installed with your Sage installation.
- The name of the Sage Data Object is required for the billing process to function. The setup process makes a good guess which may have to be changed as you upgrade to a newer version of Sage. The naming convention is the text **`SDOEngine`** plus your Sage version number.
- Remember to press the **`Save`** button.

The two test buttons allow you to check the connection to the Sage Application and also to the Sage Database. Ensure that these are working and remember to save the configuration before you perform the upload process.

Sage User Setup

Use the Settings-Access Rights option in Sage to add a new user and restrict access to every module except Invoicing and Customers.



Upgrading Sage

SYNC Billing should continue to work with a new version of Sage. After installing and upgrading Sage, change the **`ODBC Driver`** and the **`SDO Name`** in the setup page and test the connections.

Check for the presence of the **`SDOENG999.DLL`** and **`SDOENG999.TLB`** file in the windows folder and activate the Third Party Integration (see the quick start section). If you have any problems, please contact redware.

Troubleshooting

Sage Third Party Activation

redware are Sage Developers and our software employs the Sage Data Objects (SDO) to access the accounting database. Your copy of Sage Line 50 may need to be activated to allow SDO to function and this is done via the **`Tools-Activation-Enable 3rd Party Integration`** menu option and may require you to locate your serial number and telephone Sage for an activation key. The telephone number is indicated on the Sage activation form.

Check the SDO *.tlb file

SYNC Billing employs a software technique known as 'late-binding' which requires that an additional file is present in the windows system folder. This file is automatically copied during your Sage installation but you should check that the file is present and may need to re-register the SDO object.

Please check the **`C:\windows\system32\`** folder to make sure that the **`SDOEng111.dll`** file is present (the numbers change according to your version of Sage). You may now need to copy the corresponding **`SDOEng111.tlb`** file from the **`c:\program files\redware\syncbilling\sdo`** folder.

It there are still problems then If there are still problems then un-register and re-register the SDO object with the following commands typed in the DOS window (use the Start-Run option and type CMD to get the DOS window):

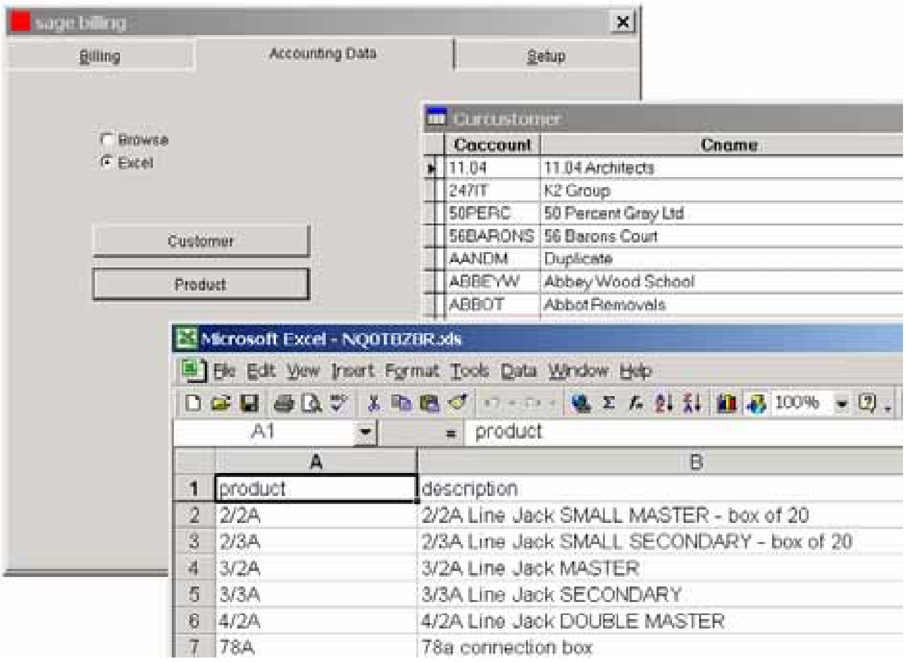
```
regsvr32 /u c:\windows\system32\sdoeng111.dll
regsvr32 c:\windows\system32\sdoeng111.dll
```

> *Note: Other versions of Sage have a different suffix according to their version number.*

Accounting Data

Customer, Product and Department data from the accounting database can be viewed easily from the **`Accounting Data`** tab simply by pressing the appropriate button.

Select the **`BROWSE`** option on the radio button to view the data within the SYNC Billing application and **`EXCEL`** if you have Microsoft Excel installed on your machine.



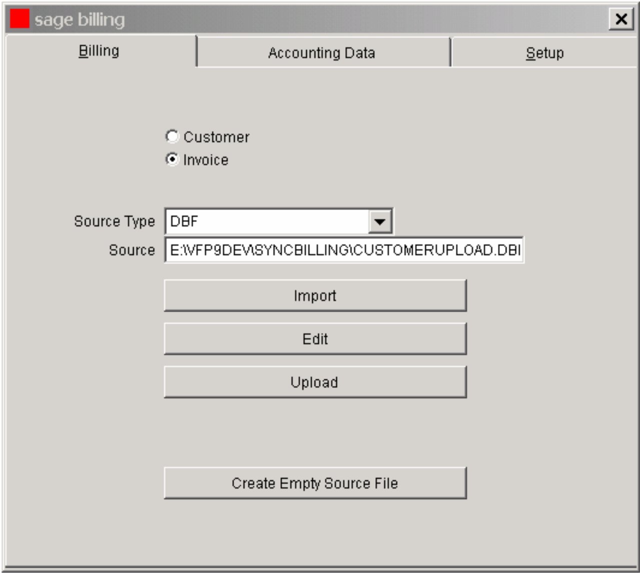
Note: Extracting data from the accounting database requires the configuration settings to have been saved.

Billing

The Billing page controls the upload process into Sage Line 50.

Customer and Invoice data can be uploaded into the accounting database from separate files. Invoices are validated for a correct account number and product reference and so any new Customers must be uploaded first.

An option for the Customer upload allows you to modify existing accounts in Sage if you are updating existing customer details in another application. Please take care when using this feature as it will overwrite any changes made by the accounting department.



Note: The upload functionality modifies your accounting database and we recommend that you make a Sage backup (and make sure you can restore the data) before using SYNC Billing to upload or modify data.

The upload process involves several stages:

- Initially, you will need to create an empty file with the **Create** button at the bottom of the page (having selected the required **customer** or **invoice** mode first using the radio button at the top of the page).
- Select the **DBF** file type for ease of use with this application.
- Other file types can now be edited with an external application and then saved and imported into the application with the **Import** button having selected the appropriate **Customer** or **Invoice** mode and **Source** filename from the fields at the top of the page.
- The **Import** process notifies you of any validation errors and you can use the **Edit** button to make any corrections. Note that you can browse the list of **Customers**, **Products** and **Departments** on the **Accounting Data** page.
- Use the **Edit** button to view the file and correct any invalid records (the error is indicated in the message field).
- Finally, the **Upload** button uploads the data into Sage.

Create

Input files must be in a specified format and original files are created using the Create button which prompts for a file location to create the new file. The following file formats are available:

- DBF – a dBASE or FoxPro table.
- XLS – an Excel spreadsheet (currently you will have to save your spreadsheet as an older version of Excel as the latest format is not supported).
- TXT – tab separated values in a text file.
- CSV – comma separated values in a text file.

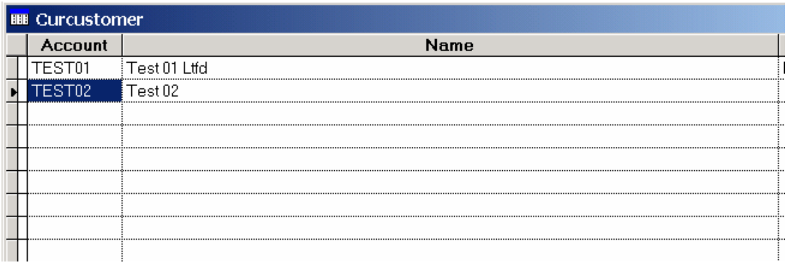
Take care that the format of the field is correct so that you do not enter text for numeric fields and vice versa.

Import

The **`Import`** button will import the data from the file specified by the Source Type and Source fields at the top of the page. A validation is also performed on each record to indicate if the record can be uploaded. You should correct any errors by fixing the data in the source file and importing once more or by editing the imported data with the **`Edit`** button.

Edit

The editing of the input file works in a similar way to a spreadsheet and you can mode the cursor around the table changing values as required (provided you respect the type of data – so you only enter dates into a date field). You can delete a record by clicking the delete mark to the left of the record or with the **`CTRL+T`** key combination and insert a record with the **`CTRL+Y`** key combination.



An errors from the validation process are indicated in the **`MESSAGE`** field at the end of the record.

Note: Check that you have entered dates correctly using the edit function.

Upload

The upload button will upload the imported data into Sage. You should backup your Sage data before letting any program access your accounting database.