The Clear Audit Trail Option in Sage 50

Overview

Each time data is entered into the live Company/ School Accounts in Sage 50, a transaction number is generated and as the number of Financial Years in the live Company increase, there will be a significant volume of transactions in the database. The volume of transactions will be a bigger issue for Schools who are using the Debtor and Creditor modules. Over time this high volume may lead to a slowing of certain processes in Sage 50 although with the more modern PC environments, Sage will say that the ball park number of transactions could reach the hundreds of thousands before operating issues will arise. Processing in Sage 50 can also slow down for PC environmental issues such as slow broadband or network setup issues and it may not be a data volume issue.

While it is important to be aware that the clear audit trail option is available in the software for housekeeping, serious consideration and care should be given to understanding this option prior to implementing it.

What does the clear audit trail option do?

This option removes transactions from the audit trail that meet certain criteria namely:

- Data on or before a specified date
- Fully paid
- Bank reconciled
- Allocated
- VAT reconciled. In school cases if the default vat code T9 is consistently used then a VAT reconciliation not required.

An opening balance journal is posted, this represents the balance of the transactions that have been removed. An audit trail history is created which holds the details of the removed transactions.

This is an optional process and remember if you clear the audit trail it will permanently delete these transactions, you will not be able to view these transactions within the live Company again, so care is needed in deciding on the date to clear or even whether to do it at all.

The benefit of clearing the audit trail:

After clearing the audit trail there will be less data stored in the live Company and the software will run quicker as there will be less transactions to filter through. It will also facilitate the clearing down of unwanted documents and inactive supplier and customer accounts where the balances are nil, and the relevant transactions have been cleared.

The downside of clearing the audit trail is the losing of history from the live Company. However, Sage 50 also provides the facility to archive data, so this can be used to file prior years data and make it accessible in the event of a query.

Other FAQ's

Do you have to clear the audit trail? No, it is optional

When to clear audit trail? Can be cleared at any point but the usual time to consider it is after running year end

Steps in clearing the audit trail

Preparation for Clearing the audit trail
1. Check data
2. Backup data
3. Archive data
4. Print all relevant reports
5. In particular print the list of bank accounts and the BOM Income + Expenditure account and Balance sheet
6. Allocate all transactions in Supplier and debtors ledger
7. Reconcile the bank accounts

Clearing the audit trail

Go to Tools/Period End/Clear Audit trail

The important thing is choosing the date for clearing transactions up to and including:
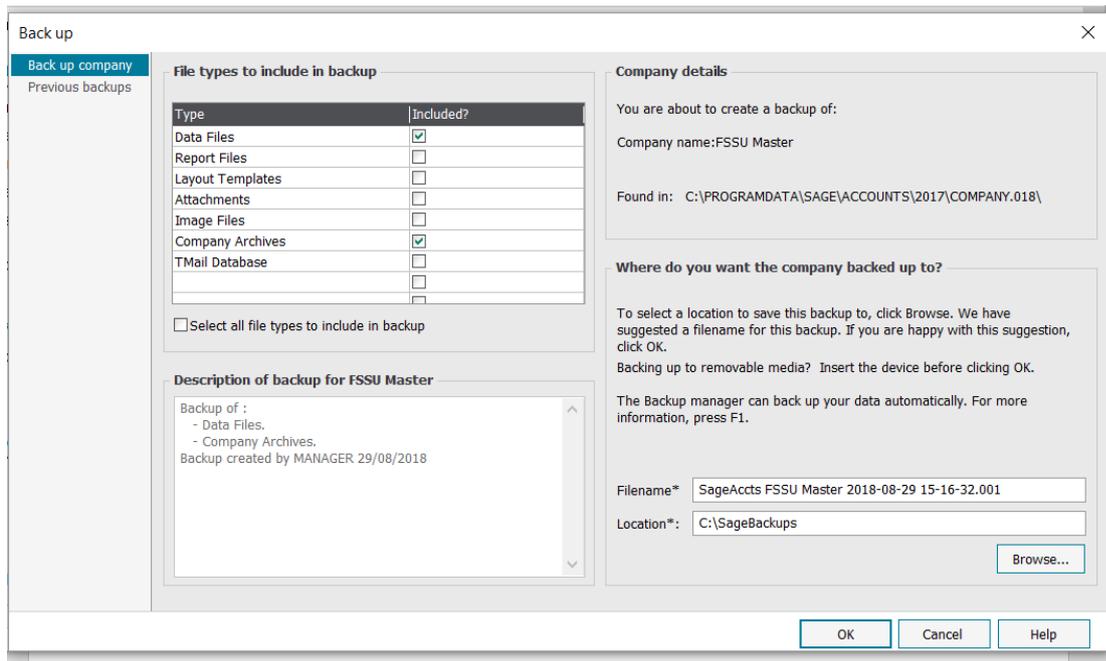>   Guideline:
>   You must keep current year and at least prior year.
>   In this example I use 31.8.2017 so the live Company will have the transactions for 2017/2018 and the new year 2018/2019
>   Check that you have inputted the date correctly

Press Clear audit trail

Sage will guide you to back up and note that I have the data files and the Company archives included in the backup

Select OK

Finally, it will tell you how many transactions were removed from the live Company. You will notice that a journal will be posted to the affected accounts as a net total of the value of transactions cleared from the audit trail.

You can print out a list of these cleared transactions under
Transactions>Reports>Cleared audit trail
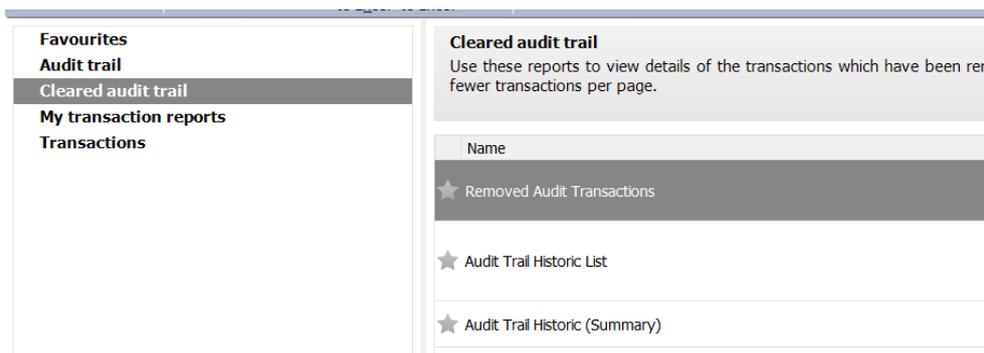
If certain transactions were not cleared it will be a question of checking which criteria was not met. For example, if the transactions remain outstanding or were not matched out then they will not be cleared.

Finally, re print the bank list and the BOM Income & Expenditure and Balance sheet reports and the figures should all agree to the figures in the reports generated at the preparation stage.