

ChequePoint 4.0

Advanced Payment Processing System

Released and in Production

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ChequePoint 4.0 Upgrade Information Kit

About

Welcome to ChequePoint 4.0. Well, this is, without a doubt, the most feature-packed new release ever. It goes beyond adding new functionality to an existing feature set by re-engineering the process as well as the underlying implementation. It would be quite impossible to list all that has changed or even all changes that we hope will benefit the end-users but we have created a Top 10 list of the most important features.

Why should I upgrade? Top 10 Reasons

Although this new release has extensive improvements, these are the ones we feel will benefit you directly and help the decision to move to ChequePoint 4.0.

1. Empty client installation Simplifies installation process and software management.

We have always strived to make ChequePoint installation simple and streamlined – with no onerous client-side installs, registry entries, files copied to client's system folders, etc. It was always relatively simple to move an existing ChequePoint installation from one machine to another. However, ChequePoint version 3.x required several client-side APIs to be installed. ChequePoint 4 still executes on the client machine, but through increased and improved reliance on “stock” technologies and development of portable APIs – ChequePoint 4 installation can be wholly server-hosted in most cases requiring no installation on the client computer (just point your shortcut to the existing server-hosted installation and go). In this way it reaps benefits of both worlds – fat-client in that it uses abundant computational resources of client machines (that are underutilized in the thin-client mode) and thin-client in that it makes administration of the distributed implementation far easier.

2. Data Sorting Advanced sorting capabilities – built-in and easy to configure.

Data sorting (when required), in the past, was done through the TAO “snap in” that in many cases required an additional TAO license and development of a custom script that needed to be capable of interpreting the data stream before ChequePoint. With ChequePoint 4, data sorting capability is built-in and available in a “simple to configure” implementation that virtually adds no time to the setup mapping. Data sorting, per se, is not a difficult proposition – but given a variety of data formats that ChequePoint is required to and capable of interfacing with, and the requirement to keep the overflow records in the same “sequence” relative to their originating record (which could be at the start or the end of the original sequence – based on customer's financial system's implementation) – we are very pleased to be able to provide a slick and simple solution to the difficult problem.

3. Audit Trail improvements Numerous improvement in setup, functionality, scalability and scope of the audit trail features.

ChequePoint 4.0 features numerous improvements to the audit trail process. First and foremost is that the audit trail data is now database hosted (rather than file-based) which allows for more scalability and stronger concurrency. Furthermore, any number of audit trails can be defined for a given job (rather than just one in the ChequePoint 3.0), which allows programmers to define separate audit trails (with different data subsets) to be

recorded and maintained. For example, an aggregate audit trail can be defined for the entire job along with audit trails listing only cheque and/or EFT data which can be presented separately.

Search functionality has also improved – with full-text search now capable of being restricted to header (summary) data or detail (record) data only, as well as capability to filter audit trail jobs based on the user, setup, workstation (from which the job was executed), time period and audit trail object that generated it.

On screen presentation of audit trail information as well as print format has also been improved with columnar information now strictly defined and presented accordingly.

4. Transaction File improvements Completely re-vamped transaction file generation allows far more versatility and scalability.

Transaction files are generic name for functionality that allows ChequePoint to produce any number of submission files including Positive Pay files, EFT files, G/L uploads and or any other kind of interface files.

Transaction file functionality has undergone a radical change under ChequePoint 4.0, resulting in a completely new implementation that is capable of producing any format file that the ChequePoint 3.x implementation could but with many features that advance its capabilities far beyond what was possible in the past. Any format file (flat, delimited, segmented) can easily be produced in the new implementation.

One of the key improvements is that the transaction file generation process itself was broken down into two distinct stages (rather than lumped into a single object as it was in the past) which allows for a more logical and easier to understand (and, more importantly, manage and maintain) interface to transaction file definition. The new 2-stage process allows for easily aggregating records from different setups into a single transaction file delivery, or conversely separating records from a single transaction file object into multiple files with a single “generate” operation!

5. Advanced printer control and job routing Increased support for routing jobs on record-by-record basis to various printers or output files across your enterprise. Custom data driven routing and device options.

In addition to the already formidable capabilities of the ChequePoint 3.x product line in area of printer control and job routing which included dynamic (data driven) device name assignment and dynamic file re-direction, new ChequePoint 4 builds on these features by providing dynamic control over device definition file bindings (so that the complete printer binding along with corresponding printer parameter can be changed from record to record) as well as dynamic device parameters – which will allow us to pass device driver-specific parameters directly to the driver based on the data content. This feature is, at present, only used for our new (built-in) PDF device driver where it provides a very useful capability of password protecting the PDF output. In the future, we will work on proliferating this new capability to our other drivers (as appropriate) in order to further enhance the customizability of the printed output.

6. Built-in PDF capability No need for 3rd party products! No client-side installations!

In order to produce Adobe Acrobat formatted files (PDFs) ChequePoint 3.x required Adobe Acrobat software to be installed on the client workstation. This worked quite well as means for producing PDF files (for e-mail attachments or filing purposes) and, using its dynamic file redirection capabilities, jobs were easily broken into individual files and named appropriately (e.g. customer#_payment#.pdf). However, we felt there were several areas of the process that could use the improvement:

- Adobe Acrobat/PDF Writer interface changed between version and it was becoming more and more difficult to support later versions in the intended (automated) mode, because Adobe positioned the product as a “personal” one-off document converter.

- It required customers to incur additional licensing costs for each workstation that needed this capability
- It required client-side installation (and maintenance) of the PDF writer tools and it was our strong desire to make ChequePoint 4 as "client-friendly" as possible.
- It made it difficult to closely interface and support some of the more advanced PDF features through the generic "printer driver" interface.

By incorporating a built-in support and creating our own native PDF driver (based on the licensed PDF technology from wpCubed GmbH) we were able to address all of the above issues. PDF capability no longer requires any client-side files/APIs to be installed, our clients no longer need to purchase Adobe Acrobat (or other PDF creation software) for each workstation and incompatibilities between different version of PDF creation tools and ChequePoint are no longer an issue. As a bonus, the internal implementation is proving much faster than the previous method relying on a PDF printer driver.

Best of all, coupled with our new dynamic device parameters, the new PDF generation method allows for automatic (data driven) encryption and password protection of the resulting PDF file. For example, customer statements can automatically be password protected using Vendor No (or another appropriate field) as a password. Employee expense remittances or payroll stubs can likewise be password protected using the SIN/SSN or Employee No (as appropriate).

7. Data File report improvements Improved data report generation and presentation capabilities.

ChequePoint 4 offers improved capabilities for data file report generation including the ability to:

- Summarize on text and date data types (previous version could only summarize numeric values)
- Provide calculations on the aggregated values. Any of the calculation types available in the record definition can now be used in data reporting.
- Improved formatting – unlike the old ChequePoint where the only format option was number of significant digits, in the new ChequePoint any aggregate or calculated field can be formatted in any of a number of numeric, text or date format options available in record definition.
- Grouped reports – in addition to the file report that applies to all the records in the job, sub-reports can be defined that can automatically group data based on a user defined field values. This powerful new feature makes it easy to separately report on payment types (cheques, EFTs), bank accounts, currencies or in any other way that makes sense for your application.
- A subset of detail information can now be embedded in the data report.
- Improved on-screen presentation and printing of the data report

8. Job Options improvements More features and options for customizing the "user experience".

We have loaded up the Job Options screen in a new ChequePoint with even more options than were available in the past. The reason for this is that we know that each of our customer requires a unique, "personalized" experience of the software and a wealth of options available allows to set this up. Whether User Prompts are shown at the start of a job (or default values are used), whether File Option screen is displayed for all users, no users or Administrators only, whether a File Selection dialog is shown or the filename is always the same, whether data file is deleted automatically when processed, left for potential re-printing or whether a user is queried about what to do with the file, and then (if the file is deleted) whether it is backed up and how – are just

a few of the “switches” that control what users “see” after they click on “Print” or “Data File Report”.

In addition to expanding the number of options available, ChequePoint 4 introduces a whole new concept of “overrides” – where any of the number of different groups of options can be overridden based on criteria such as job type (batch, auto-print, manual entry or data report), user name (do different users can actually trigger different behavior), workstation from which the job was initiated, etc.

9. Concurrent execution improvements Simultaneous execution of jobs of any type from different workstations without restrictions. Simplified installation.

Network implementation of the ChequePoint 3.x installation was capable of allowing multiple user execution simultaneously, but with few important restrictions had to be observed. In order to execute jobs simultaneously from the same setup file (or from different setup files writing to the same audit trail or transaction file), different “local” directories had to be created for multiple licenses to allow the setup file to execute in their own “private” space. This led to disjointed audit trails (where several “sub-installation” had to be viewed to get a complete picture of activities), separate transaction file process to join the transaction files (if they were to be submitted together), and most importantly a careful attention during the installation process to insure that the restriction(s) would be observed and avoid any possibility of consequent data loss.

New ChequePoint 4 dispenses with all of the above restrictions (largely due to improvements in audit trail and transaction file functionality) and is simple to install and “safe” to operate any setup simultaneously. Local execution folders concept is still supported – in cases where it is desirable to have different working location (e.g. different transaction or audit databases for different function) but it is far less critical to system integrity to configure the folders properly.

Consequently, multiple licenses can now (optionally) be shared between different function – e.g. if a separate license was purchased for A/P (for cheque printing) and A/R (for invoice printing) they can now be configured so that two A/P users can simultaneously run their jobs (providing that no A/R users are running invoice jobs). Of course, if this is not desirable, the system can still be configured so that licenses are automatically allocated only to the functional unit that purchased them (as in the past).

10. Tighter integration with [TAO](#) Process Control Enhanced abilities and support for custom processing requirements and automation.

TAO scripts were, even in the past, instrumental in being able to achieve customized and automated processing directly from within ChequePoint without writing custom (compiled) code, but rather through simple GUI driven scripting. With ChequePoint 4, we made significant advances in the integration of the two packages. TAO scripts can now execute directly from within ChequePoint process (not requiring execution of a separate run-time executable). Furthermore, TAO script(s) can now be executed for each record ChequePoint processes, further advancing our ability to custom tailor the process to individual customer needs.

If you feel these upgrades could improve your experience with ChequePoint please contact us for further information or to see a demonstration of the new version up and close.

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