CTAS News & Notes

CTAS and Windows XP

The Office of the State Auditor (OSA) has a computer with Windows XP running CTAS. Currently, CTAS has passed all of the tests we have run. However, we continue to test CTAS on Windows XP as issues arise.

Our recommendation is to install CTAS before installing any other additional software. This was the solution that allowed one user to use CTAS on a Windows XP computer.

The issues with Windows XP and CTAS continue to appear to be computer specific. We will assist users in installing CTAS on Windows XP computers. However, we cannot guarantee that CTAS will run on all computers. This is true regardless of the operating system installed on the computer. If you need assistance in installing CTAS, please call the Helpline.

CTAS Bulletin Board

The CTAS Bulletin Board is available to all CTAS users. This Bulletin Board is a good reference tool for CTAS users.

OSA staff reviews the postings on the Bulletin Board on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Answers to common questions received by the Helpline are periodically posted on the Bulletin Board. In addition, users are invited to post their answers or comments to the questions raised on the Bulletin Board. The Bulletin Board is available to allow users to assist one another in using CTAS.

To access the Bulletin Board, click on the CTAS section of the OSA web site at www.osa.state.mn.us. Users needing assistance in accessing the Bulletin Board can call 651-297-7104.

Training

The OSA offers training sessions on the Windows version of the CTAS system. This is a basic beginners course designed for those users that have limited or no experience using the CTAS system.

These sessions are held at the State Auditor's Office in St. Paul. A training session is scheduled for July 11, 2002. The training session begins at 9:00 a.m. and will end at approximately 1:00 p.m.

Please call Ms. Billi Sanders at (651) 297-3684 to register for a training session. The resources available for training require that we have a maximum of six people for a session. Due to the time and resource commitment, the OSA reserves the right to cancel a training session if registrations do not exceed three.

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Participants should bring their Reference Manual to the training session. A training workbook is provided.

The training session will be held at the State Auditor's Office, Suite 400, 525 Park Street, St. Paul, MN. Parking is available across the street in the Bethesda Ramp. Directions are available on our website.

In addition to this training session, the Minnesota Association of Townships (MAT) is offering a series of training sessions titled Summer Short Courses. These training sessions include two CTAS sections. The morning session is a general overview of the CTAS system. In the afternoon, a computer lab will be set up where participants will have an opportunity for hands-on training.

The MAT Summer Short Courses are scheduled for July 16 in Owatonna, July 17 in Marshall, July 18 in St. Cloud, July 30 in Fergus Falls, July 31in Thief River Falls and August 1 in Grand Rapids. City officials are invited to attend the CTAS training offered during the Summer Short Courses. Please call the MAT Office at 1-800-228-0296 for information on the Summer Short Courses. There is a registration fee for attending these training sessions.

Motivational Quote

Courage is not limited to the battlefield or the Indianapolis 500 or bravely catching a thief in your house. The real tests of courage are much quieter. They are inner tests, like remaining faithful when nobody's looking, like enduring pain when the room is empty, like standing alone when you're misunderstood.

   -- Charles Swindoll
     Inspirational Writer

Backing up Data in CTAS Version 5

In discussing the types of calls received on the CTAS Helpline, a concern has been expressed regarding the backing up of the CTAS data. It appears that the backup feature of CTAS is not being fully utilized. Not backing up your data is like a high wire act not using a net. If something happens, there is nothing to prevent a disaster.

CTAS Backup Procedures

1. Click on the Administration button (Admin).

2. Click on the Utilities Tab (F5).

3. Insert a diskette in Drive A.

4. Click on the Backup button.

5. Click on the Run Backup button.

6. Click the OK button.

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Small City & Town Accounting System
Helpline: Phone: (651) 297-3682   Fax: (651) 282-2391   E-mail: ctas@osa.state.mn.us

The CTAS system will backup your data onto the diskette. If a second disk is required, the system will ask you to insert diskette number two. Using this backup procedure will allow the use of the Restore Database Button on the Welcome screen.

Recommended Backup Method

1. Use a minimum of three sets of backup disks.

2. Rotate the backup sets. For example, use set 1 for week 1, set 2 for week 2, and set 3 for week 3. Then for week 4 use set 1 again. Then continue the rotation.

3. Make two backup copies at the end of the month. These will not be rotated. Store one set of the backup disks off-site.

4. After three months, replace the weekly disks with a new set. Diskettes will wear out if they continue to be rewritten.

Explanations

Why use three backup sets? When backing up the data, you could inadvertently backup corrupted data. If you only have one set of backup disks, there is no longer a backup set of the data. The chances of three sets of backup disks being corrupt are extremely small. Therefore, all you need to re-enter is the data added since the backup.

Accounting

Recording a Transfer

Transfers are used to move resources from one fund to another. The CTAS system requires the use of specific numbers for transfers. The receipt number is 39200 and the disbursement number is 49360.

The entries for transferring money from the General Fund (100) to the Road and Bridge Fund (201) is as follows:

Road and Bridge Fund:
Receipt Number: TRF01
Account No.: 201-39200

General Fund:
Check Number: TRF01
Account No.: 100-49360-720

The TRF01 is the number I assigned to this transaction.

Using the assigned number will ensure that the transfers are shown on Schedule 1 of the financial statements. The transfer of money to or from a savings account should be shown as a purchase or sale of an investment.

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Recording a purchase or sale of an investment (transfer from savings to checking).

The transfer of money from the savings account to the checking account is defined as a sale of an investment in terms of the CTAS system. To record the transfer of money from the savings to the checking (sale of investment), click the Add Button in the receipts section. Then follow these steps:

1. For the receipt number a code can be used, such as SI001, for a sale of investment.

2. Then enter the date, the name of the bank from which the withdrawal was made, the total amount of the withdrawal, and a short description.

3. Enter the allocation of funds for the sale of the investment using 36290 as the account number and record the transaction.

Frequently Asked Questions

What type of checks do I need to order for my Ink-jet or Laser printer and are window envelopes available?

The type of check needed for a laser or inkjet printer is Deluxe LaserJet Check form; Product Number 81064; Laser Multi-purpose Check 8 1/2 X 11.

I have spoken with two check printers that provide this format. They are:

Rose
American Business Forms
320-763-5535
Paul Schmidt
Victor Lundeen Corp.
218-736-5433

In addition, both printers now have window enve-lopes available for CTAS system checks.

How do I transfer the CTAS system and data from one computer to another?

Here are the steps to trans-fer the CTAS program and your data from one com-puter to another:

1. Complete the backup in CTAS on the old computer (to diskette).

2. Install CTAS on the new computer from the original CTAS Version 5 for Windows CD.

3. Install the 5.2.1 update on the new computer.

4. Start CTAS.

5. Click the Restore Data-base Button on the Wel-come screen.

6. Inset the backup disk into drive A.

7. Click the Run Restore Button and follow the on - screen directions.

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The CTAS system with your information is now loaded. Click the Continue Button to begin using CTAS on the new computer.

When I tried to print a report, I received the error message number 32006. Why doesn't my report print?

The date format in the Windows operating system needs to be changed. Complete the following steps to update the system:

1. Double click on My Computer.

2. Double click on Control Panel.

3. Double click on Regional Settings.

4. Click on Date Tab.
5. Change the Short Date Style to MM/DD/YYYY.

6. Click Apply and OK.

7. All Screens can be closed.

The Clipboard

, The Helpline now has two additional numbers available. Users with accounting issues can call 651-297-3684. Those with computer issues can call 651-297-7104.

, CTAS Version 5 is a stand-alone system. A network version of the system is not available. The Helpline does not have the expertise to troubleshoot getting CTAS to run on a network.

, When a claim has been posted it cannot be changed. All changes must be made in disbursements. Changes made in disbursements should also be recorded on the printed claim form.

, What to do when the system has performed an illegal operation and the CTAS system will not run. Shut down the computer and re-start. This should clear any problems the system is having.

, When exiting CTAS, click on the Exit Button. Do not click on the small "x" in the upper right-hand corner. CTAS is a transaction-based system. Therefore, for the system to close and update all files correctly use the Exit Button.

, Caution is the key when installing new software. The new software may overwrite Windows system files needed by CTAS.