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Sage Instant Accounts

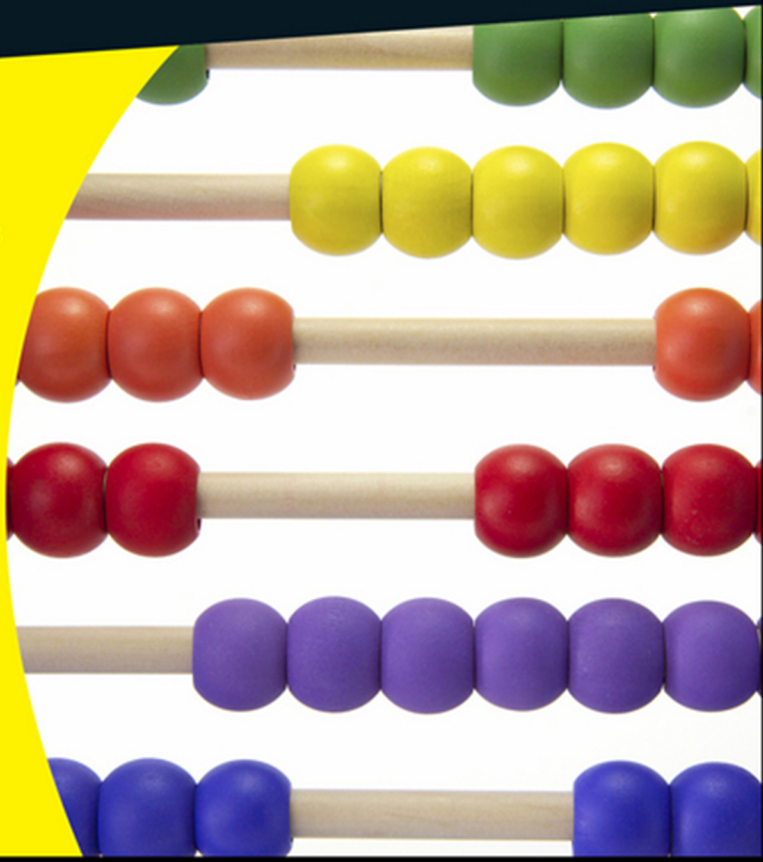
FOR
DUMMIES[®]
A Wiley Brand

Learn to:

- Install and set up Sage Instant Accounts
- Keep track of money in and out and easily view your cash position
- Store customer information and generate quotes, invoices and remittances
- Produce reports on your business performances and manage your VAT

Jane Kelly

Author of *Bookkeeping For Dummies*®



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***Sage Instant
Accounts***

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FOR
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by Jane Kelly

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Sage Instant Accounts For Dummies®

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Introduction

Sage is a well-known accounting system used in more than three-quarters of a million small- and medium-sized businesses in the UK. The range of business software continually evolves, and Sage's developers pride themselves on listening to their customers for feedback on how to improve the software. This evolution results in regular revisions and updates that add new features to Sage each time.

This book offers you a chance to understand how Sage Instant Accounts can help you run your business effectively.

About This Book

The aim of this book is for you to get the most from Sage. I use lots of screenshots to help you navigate your way around the system and offer tips to help you customise the programs and reports contained in Sage in language you can understand, even if you're not an accountant.

Wherever possible, I show you the quickest way to do something, because you can often do the same thing in more than one way. I understand that you want a quick start, so I show you the easiest methods of doing things. You can always add details later, when time permits.

This book presents information in a modular fashion so that you get all the information to accomplish a task in one place. I don't ask you to remember things from different parts of the book; if another chapter has information relevant to the discussion at hand, I tell you where to find it, so you don't have to read the chapters in order. You can read the chapters or sections that interest you when it suits you.

Foolish Assumptions

While writing *Sage Instant Accounts For Dummies*, I made some key assumptions about who you are and why you picked up this book. I assume that you fall into one of the following categories:

- ✔ You're a member of staff in a small business who's been asked to take over the bookkeeping function and will be using Sage.
- ✔ You're an existing bookkeeper who has never used Sage before or who needs to refresh your knowledge.
- ✔ You're a small-business owner who wants to understand how Sage can help in your business.

Icons Used in This Book

Every *For Dummies* book uses icons to highlight especially important, interesting or useful information. The icons used in this book are:



Look at this icon for practical information that you can use straightaway to help you use Sage in the most effective way.



This icon indicates any items you need to remember after reading the book – and sometimes throughout it.



This icon calls your attention to examples of specific tasks being carried out in Sage Instant Accounts. Read them through to see how Sage is used in a variety of accounting activities.



This icon indicates that a function is available only to users of Sage Instant Accounts Plus.



The paragraphs next to this icon contain information that is, er, slightly technical in nature. You don't *need* to know the information here to get by, but it helps.



This bombshell alerts you to potential problems you may create for yourself without realising it. Don't ignore this icon!

Beyond The Book

Find out more about Sage Instant Accounts by checking out the bonus content available to you at www.dummies.com.

You can locate the book's e-cheat sheet at www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/sageinstantaccountsuk. Here you'll find handy Sage function key shortcuts, tips n backing up your data as well as a monthly management account checklist.

Be sure to visit the book's extras page at www.dummies.com/extras/sageinstantaccountsuk for further Sage related information and articles.

Where to Go from Here

You're now ready to enter the world of Sage. If you're a complete beginner, starting at the beginning and gradually working through is probably best. If you're an existing user, but a little rusty in certain areas, you can pick the chapters that are most relevant to you, probably in Parts III and IV. This book is designed for you to dip in and out of. I hope that you find it a useful tool for developing and managing your business.

4

Sage Instant Accounts For Dummies

Part I

Getting Started with Sage Instant Accounts

getting started
with
**sage instant
accounts**



For Dummies can help you get started with lots of subjects. Visit www.dummies.com to learn more and do more with *For Dummies*.

In this Part . . .

- ✔ Get yourself going! Install Sage Instant Accounts quickly and efficiently.
- ✔ Tailor Sage Instant Accounts to meet your business's book-keeping needs by creating your Chart of Accounts.
- ✔ Learn how to set up customer, supplier, nominal, bank and products records.
- ✔ Enter your opening balances and start using Sage Instant Accounts to improve your account keeping.

Chapter 1

Introducing Sage Instant Accounts

In This Chapter

- ▶ Introducing the Sage software range
 - ▶ Considering SageCover
 - ▶ Installing the software
 - ▶ Getting help from the wizard
 - ▶ Navigating around Sage
-

In this chapter, I introduce you to Sage Instant Accounts. I show you how easily you can install the software and give you a guided tour, so that you can get up and running quickly – essential for busy people!

Sage works on the principle that the less time you spend doing your accounts, the more time you can spend on your business, so makes each process as simple as possible.

I also discuss SageCover, an optional technical support package, which is an addition worth considering. If you experience software problems, SageCover can help. For small businesses, this support is like having an IT department at the end of a phone.

Looking at Two Sage Instant Options

Sage offers two versions of Instant Accounts:

- ✓ **Sage Instant Accounts:** The entry-level program. Sage Instant Accounts provides all the features you require to successfully manage your accounts. You can professionally handle your customers and suppliers, manage your bank reconciliations and VAT returns and provide simple reports, including monthly and year-end requirements. This basic version is suitable for small businesses with a simple structure.
- ✓ **Sage Instant Accounts Plus:** Contains all the features of the entry model, but in addition includes a simple stock system and also the ability to have up to two users.

Deciding on SageCover

You can purchase SageCover at the same time as the software. SageCover provides you with technical support in case you have any problems using Sage. It may seem an additional cost burden to begin with, but is well worth the money if you've a software problem. Sage does currently offer 45 days of free telephone support, along with free online learning and access to guides and video tutorials.

Most people who use accounting packages know something about accounting, but don't necessarily know much about computer software. When the screen pops up with an error message that you simply don't understand, a quick phone call to your SageCover support line soon solves the problem.

For Sage Instant Accounts, you can choose between two different types of cover:

- ✓ **SageCover:** Provides telephone support during normal office hours, as well as email and online question and answer support. You also have access to a data repair service, where a member of the Sage in-house

team will retrieve and repair your data if it becomes lost or corrupt. There's also a free subscription to Sage's business magazine *Solutions*.

- ✓ **SageCover Extra:** Includes all the benefits of SageCover, plus software upgrades, so you always have access to the latest version. You also gain the benefit of an Express data repair service rather than just the standard service. You're given priority telephone support with Sagecover Extra, including a call-back option and also have additional Remote Support, which means that, with your permission, Sage technicians can remotely access your PC to help you solve your queries.

Having someone on the end of a phone to talk you through a problem is a real bonus. Sometimes the Help button just doesn't answer your question. The technical support team can help you solve the most awkward problems that would otherwise have you throwing your laptop out of the window in pure frustration!

I recommend that you install Sage Instant on a Windows operating system. Windows 8 or 7, Windows Vista, Windows XP, Windows Server 2008, Small Business Server 2011 or Server 2003 are all recommended by Sage.

Installing the Software

In this section, I take you step by step through the installation process, showing you the screens as they appear on your computer and ensuring that you load up the software correctly. I also let you know about any problems that may crop up while loading, so that you can deal with them effectively.

Anyway, onwards and upwards!

Getting what you need before you get started

Your Sage software package contains a CD, a ‘Getting Started with Sage Instant Accounts’ guide and, more importantly, a serial number and activation key. Without these last two pieces of information, you can’t successfully load the software. But don’t worry, if you purchased a genuine copy of Sage software, you have the necessary activation information.

You also need a few details about your company:

- ✓ **When your company’s financial year begins:** If you’re not sure of the date, consult your accountant.
- ✓ **Whether and what type of VAT scheme you use:** Again, your accountant can tell you whether you operate the VAT cash accounting scheme or the standard VAT scheme. If you’ve a VAT registration number, keep it handy.

Moving to the installation itself

The following steps assume that you’re loading Sage for the first time for a single company and single user. For those of you loading multiple-user programs, check the instructions provided with your software.

1. Insert your CD into the disk drive.

If your CD doesn’t immediately start, you may need to click Run.

2. Follow the options on your screen to run the CD.

A Sage Instant Accounts opening screen appears. Click the Install button to continue as shown in Figure 1-1.

For Vista users, the User Account Control window appears, asking you for permission to continue installing Sage; click Continue to proceed.

The Sage system checker highlights any problems with loading your software, such as hardware speed and so on as shown in Figure 1-2. Click Install to continue.

Figure 1-1:
The initial
screen
prior to
installing the
software.

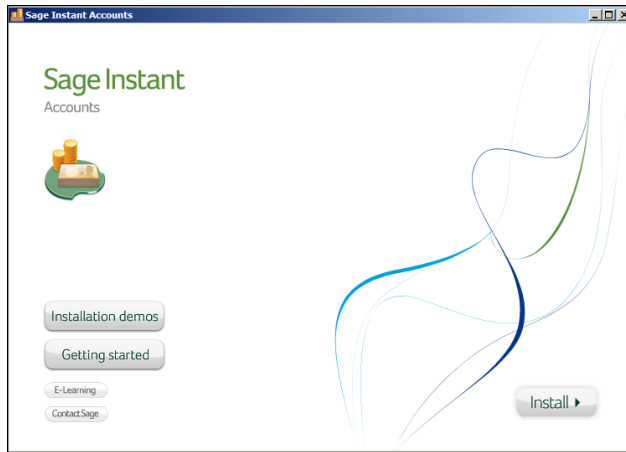
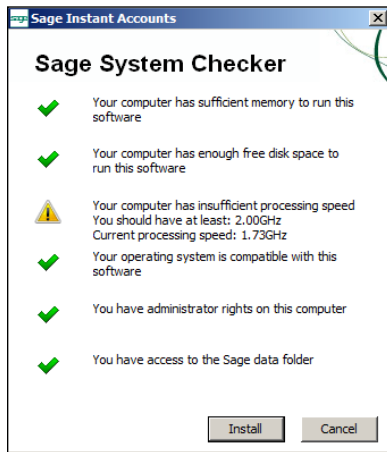


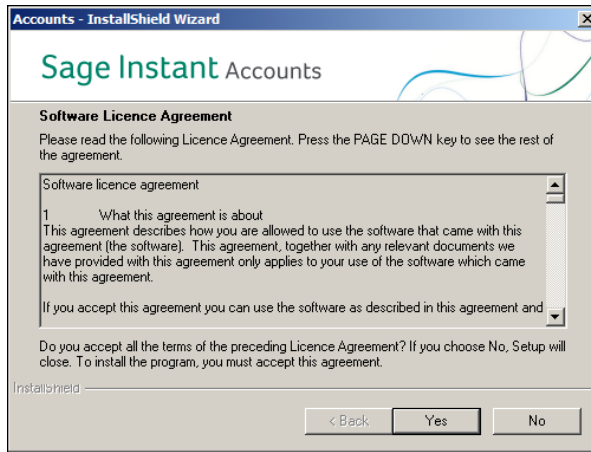
Figure 1-2:
System
checker.



3. The Accounts Installshield wizard starts up when you click Install and this is followed by the Licence agreement as shown in Figure 1-3.

Be warned, the licence seems to go on forever, if you choose to read it! (Have a quick look through the software licence agreement though, just to see what you're signing up for!) Click Yes to accept the licence.

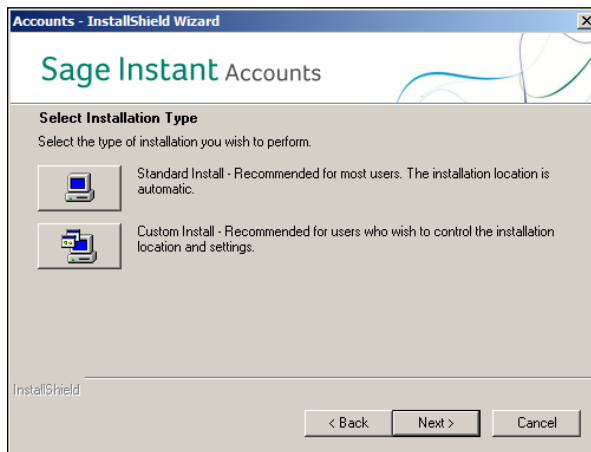
Figure 1-3:
Accepting
the software
licence
agreement.



4. Select the installation type and destination folder and follow the prompts.

You've a choice between a Standard install and a Custom install, as shown in Figure 1-4. The choice you make is important.

Figure 1-4:
Choosing
Standard
or Custom
install.



Standard install is recommended for most users; it copies the files to C:\Sage\Accounts.

Choose Custom install only if you want to control the destination of the programs being installed; for example, if you want to keep different versions of Sage separately on your computer.

Check with Sage (the company, not the program!) if you aren't sure whether to use the Custom install or not.

If you want to use Custom install and choose a different destination folder, follow these steps:

i. Click the Custom install option.

The destination folder at the bottom of the screen automatically defaults to C:\Sage\Accounts 2011.

- ii. Click Browse.** With the help of the Browse button you can change the destination folder, as shown in Figure 1-5. I have changed it to C:\Sage\Instant Accounts 2013. Click OK. The destination path has now changed to the new one that you've designated. Click Next to continue.

Select your Program folder – this window allows you to change the program folder to your preferred destination, as shown in Figure 1-6 you can now click Next to continue.

Sage now confirms the destination folders for the program as shown in Figure 1-7. Click Next to continue.

Figure 1-5:
Click the
browse
button to
find an
alternative
destination
for the Sage
program.

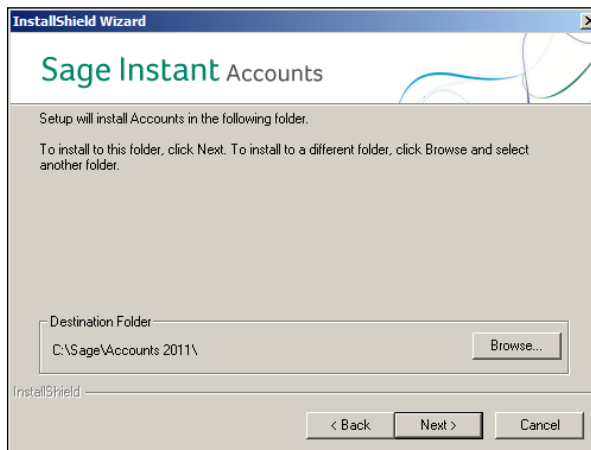


Figure 1-6:
Having amended to Sage Instant 2013 directory.

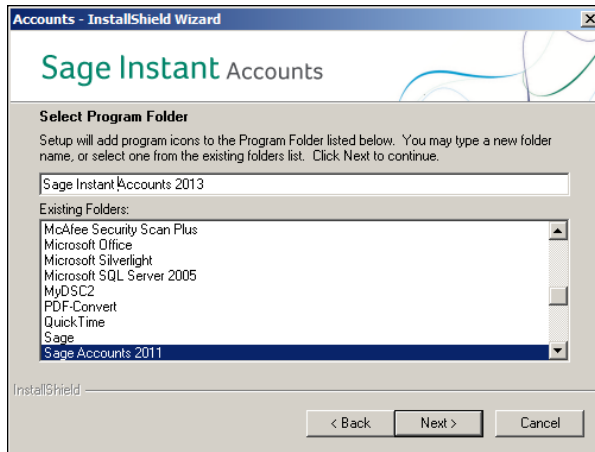
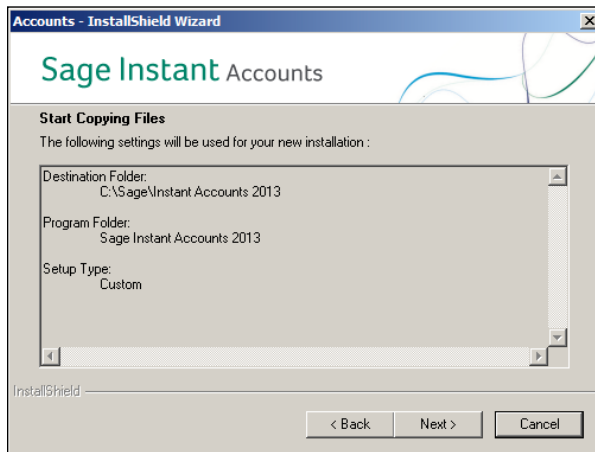


Figure 1-7:
Sage confirms the destination folders for Instant Accounts.



The system then whirrs into action and starts the installation process. It takes several minutes, so you probably have time to make a quick cup of tea!

5. Click Finish when Sage tells you that the installation is complete.

That's it! You've successfully installed your Sage software. This is the message you should see, shown in Figure 1-8. You should see a Sage Instant Accounts icon on your desktop – now you're ready to rock and roll!

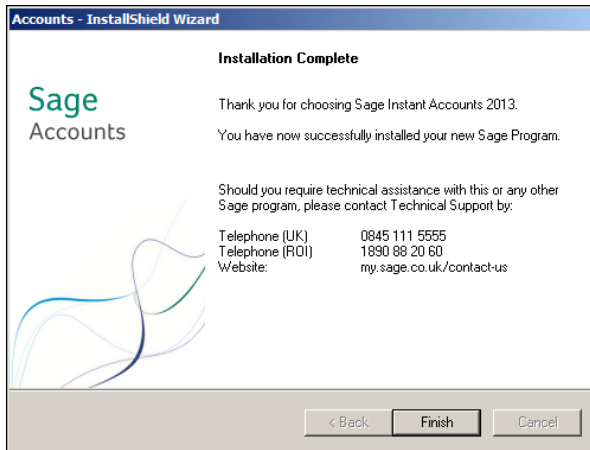


Figure 1-8:
Confirmation
of a
successful
installation!



Be sure to remove the CD and keep it in a safe place!

Setting Up with the Active Set-Up Wizard

Of course, you're champing at the bit and want to get going with Sage, so double-click the new Sage icon on your desktop to get started. You may get an RSS feeds message (see Figure 1-9) and you can decide whether you want to receive these or not by clicking on the tick box. Click OK to continue.

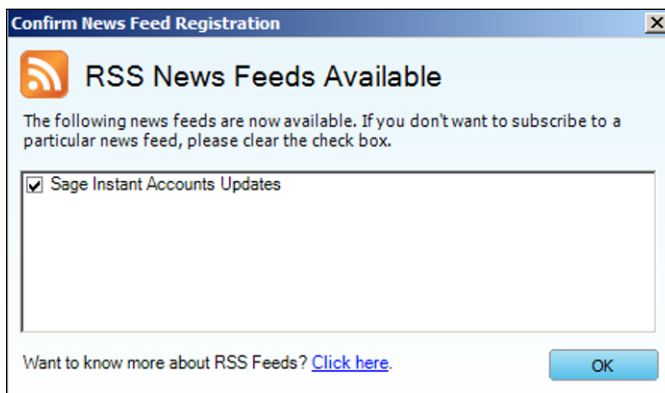


Figure 1-9:
Checking
your RSS
feeds.