

GAIN FOCUS TECHNOLOGIES



REASONS TO USE PROGRESSION WORKFLOW EXPLORER

By Don Gilsdorf
Gain Focus Technologies

What is PWE?

Progression Workflow Explorer – aka PWE – was introduced by Macola in 1999 as an alternative interface to the Macola program, with more functionality than the standard Progression Explorer. When first introduced, this was a fairly buggy interface, and as a result, many Macola users were averse to using it or in many cases, were instructed not to use it.

PWE has been very much bug free for quite some time now, and there are a number of pieces of functionality that you can gain from PWE, and this document will cover those pieces of functionality.

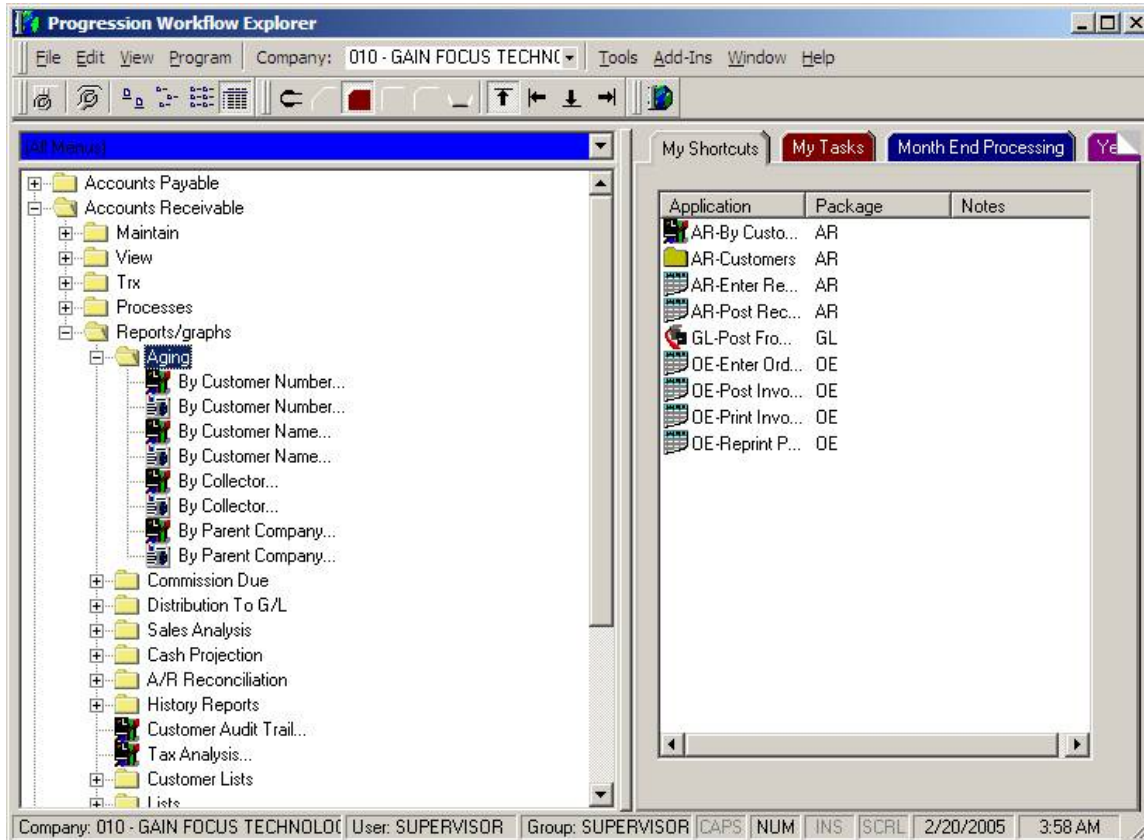
Automatically checks for, and deletes, “ghost users”

Have you ever had to go into the users directory and delete the “ghost sessions” there? This simple, though tedious task has been greatly reduced if not entirely eliminated by using PWE

When a user logs in as SUPERVISOR to Macola via PWE, all sessions in the user directory are deleted automatically, unless they are currently in use.

ICRs – Integrated Crystal Reports

By using PWE, you now have access to many hundreds of Crystal Reports that are integrated into the program. These menu options are only available in PWE, and if you are using progression explorer you can never run them, even though all the reports are installed in your Macola\Rpts directory. The following screenshot shows all the PWE reports, with white icons. The existing cobol reports are the multicolored icons:



You do not need to own Crystal Reports to run these reports, as PWE comes with its own Crystal Reports Viewer. If you do own Crystal Reports, these reports can even be modified, although if Macola changes a report and you install updates, the report will get overwritten.

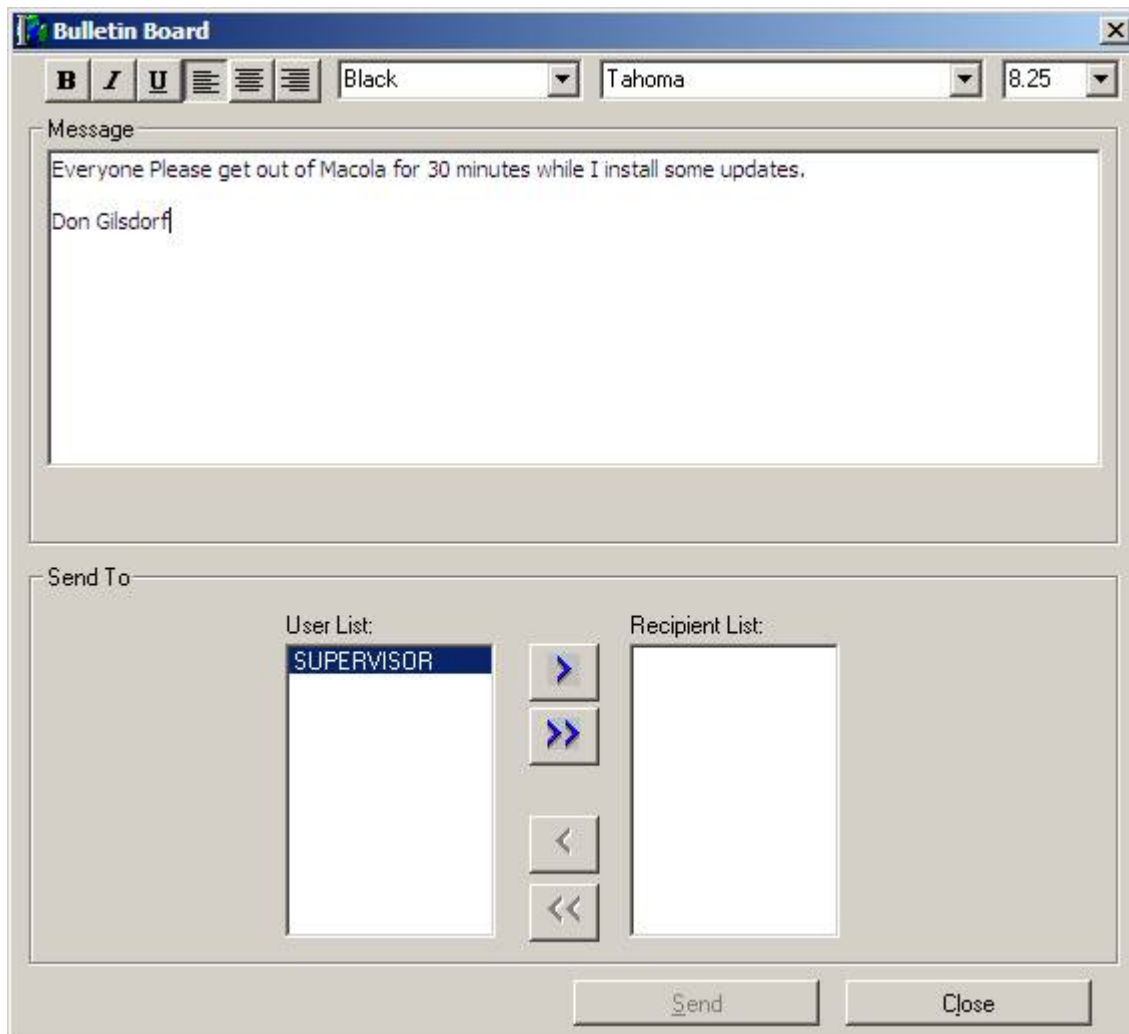
One caveat – when a new menu option is added in Macola, by default the only users that automatically get the new menu options are SUPERVISOR, GUEST and DEMO. So to take full advantage of the ICRs, the SUPERVISOR must go into visual menu builder and provide access to these new menu options manually.

Ability to log in as a different user without closing Macola

Macola users who had used the DOS version of Macola may remember that this feature was lost when upgrading to the windows version of Macola. With PWE, we have this option back. Just click on file, login as different user and away you go.

Send a bulletin to all Macola users:

PWE allows you to broadcast a bulletin to all Macola users (or only selected users) on an as needed basis. Click on programs, bulletin and the following screen appears:



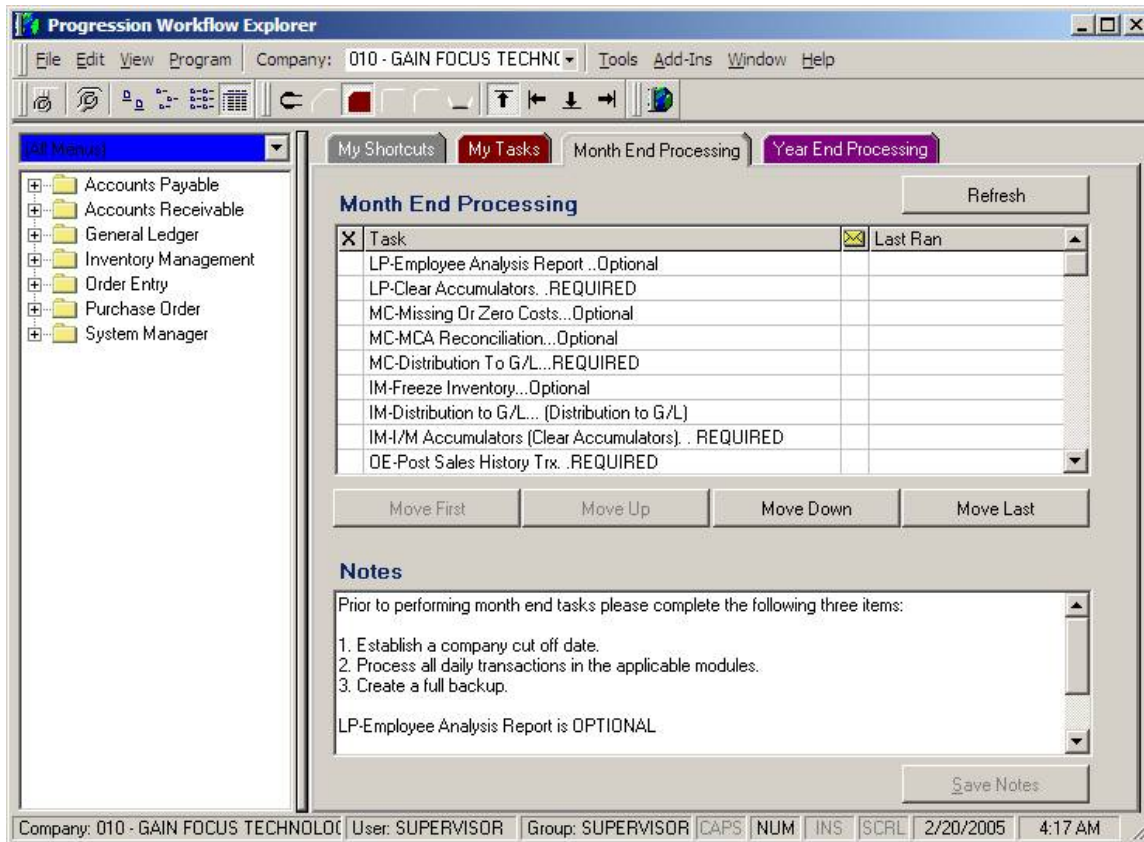
This sure beats running up and down the halls and or making phone calls to accomplish this!

Task Lists

While Progression explorer allows you to create shortcuts, PWE allows you to create task lists, with a date/time stamp indicating the last time this task was run. The tasks – which are not limited to Macola applications – are great for keeping you organized.

Task lists are great for things you do not do every day, such as roll up standard costs. There are several tasks required to successfully roll up standard costs, and once you create a task list for this, you have them all in proper order, ready to run.

PWE also comes with an extensive Month End and Year End task list, and the value of this speaks for itself. The following screenshot shows you the Month End task list:

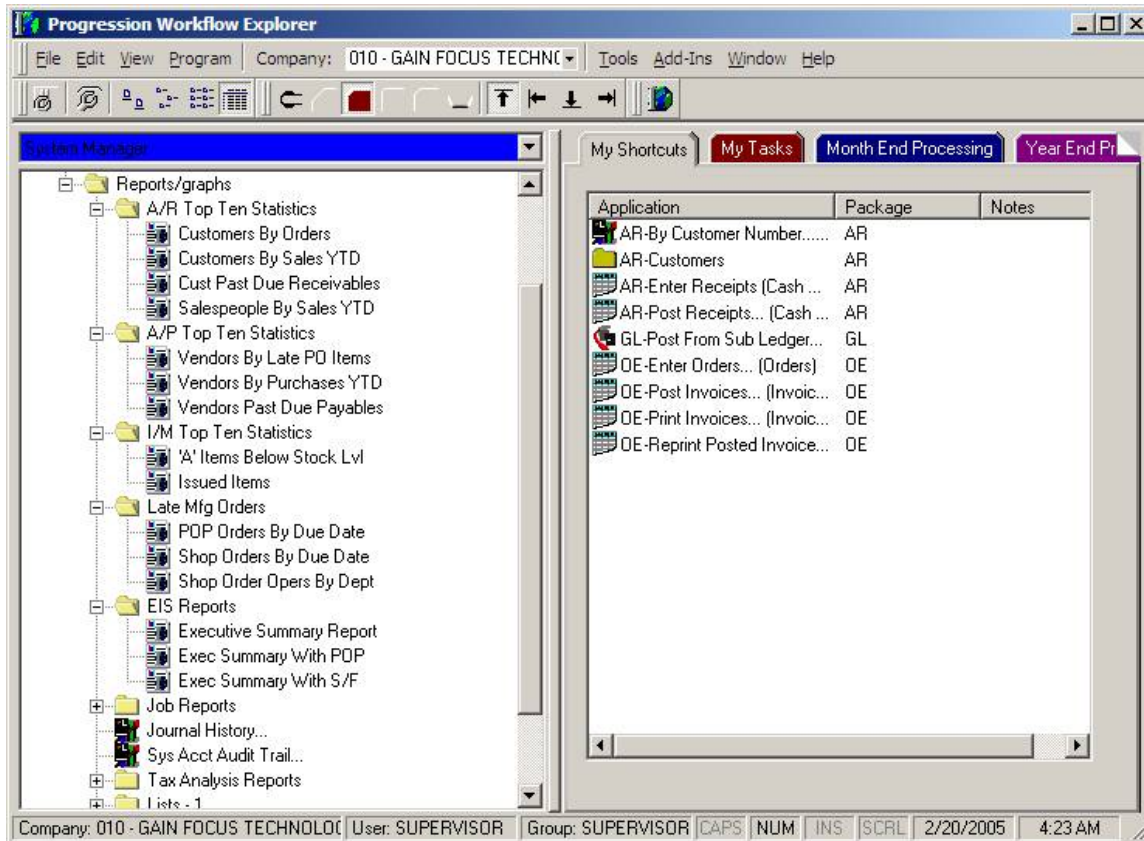


New functionality not available in Progression Explorer

There are a number of pieces of new functionality built into Macola that are not even available at all if you are still using Progression Explorer. On the following screenshot of the System Manager menu, you will see a lot of Top 10 type reports, which is great new information.

Also there is an entirely new menu option called EIS reports (Executive Information Summary Reports) which are a huge series of Crystal Reports showing major business metrics. Any executive will love this information.

None of this is available unless you are using PWE. Here is a screen shot of SOME of the new menu options:

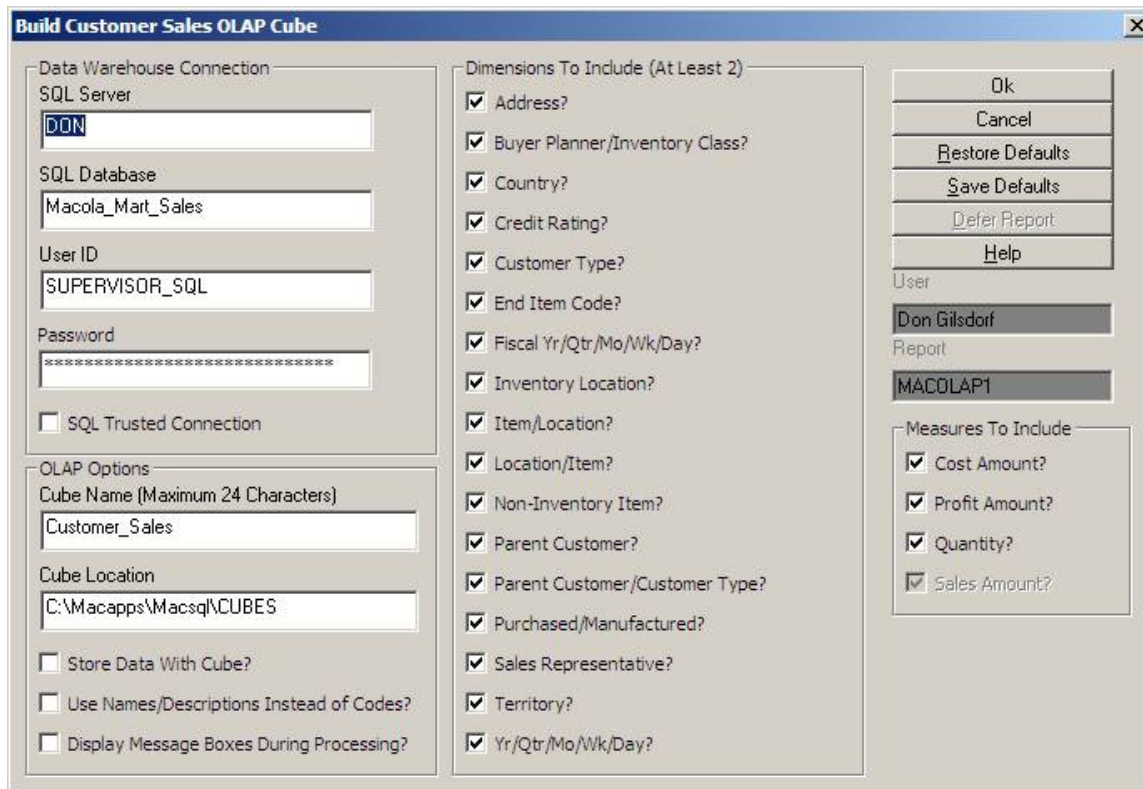


OLAP Cubes

Any experienced programmer or report designer has probably used, or at least heard of, OLAP cubes. OLAP (online analytical processing) cubes are multidimensional summaries of data designed to make it easier to perform complex queries. The choice of report tool – Crystal, MS Access, VB, etc. – is entirely up to you.

In PWE, you can create OLAP cubes on Sales Data by Item, Salesperson, and Customers, making report writing on these multidimensional cubes a lot easier than a slow running query against the OELINHST_SQL and OEHRHST_SQL tables.

Here is a sample screen used to build an OLAP cube:



One caveat – this is available to MS SQL users only, Pervasive does not support OLAP cubes.

Summary

All in all, PWE is a great tool that has been under utilized by the Macola end user base. If you have any questions on PWE or on Macola in general, please email me at dgilsdorf@gainfocus.biz.