PineSoft

Newsletter : February 2006

Software Update

Summer 2005 saw the launch of XP version 11 of PineSoft and this will be rolled out to all customers during 2006. Customers data files will require to be updated to the new format and this will be undertaken free of charge as I am anxious for users to benefit from the new features.

New Features in Version 11

A number of significant new features have been added to the application and include :

❑ auto scaling forms to adjust to different screen resolutions. (Previous Centred window display is still available as a User-definable option)

❑ extension of the existing Company, Student and Placement Tasks pop-ups to incorporate an unlimited number of user defined hyperlinks. This will make it easy to provide direct links from within the PineSoft application to existing reports, documents, CV's, images etc.

❑ an all new "Jobs" module which will enable users to record comprehensive details of vacancies as shown below (Job Classification Criteria Flags are User-defined to facilitate the matching of job vacancies to student preferences). It is recommended that new Jobs are added via the pop-up [icon] in Company forms, the only essential field to be entered is a unique Job Reference, the Company & Location fields are linked automatically as are default Job Title "Student Placement" and Vacancies "1". Users who are happy with the status quo and apprehensive about the new Jobs Module do not need to enter any other information if they don't want to.

- the number of student applications, current placements and jobs/vacancies is displayed automatically below the relevant PineSoft buttons in Company and Student forms so users will know whether pop-ups contain any records. (A very useful new feature)

- when exporting to a file for use in Word Mail Merge documents users can now choose between a (.xls) Excel file or a (.txt) Text File. Microsoft appears to have fixed the previous problem where unmatched quotes caused problems with imported fields, so I would recommend using the Text format. The problem of UK dates from Access & Excel being converted to US format in Word remains – another reason to use Text files as the data source in Word Mail Merge! The latest PineSoft Help file includes details about how to change the format of merged dates in Word, to suit your requirements.

- a sixth user definable flag has been added to Company records and one of the two information fields in Placement records has been converted to a Memo field.

- reports have been updated to incorporate the new structure and new "Jobs" reports added. One user plans to output the "Jobs - Full" report in Adobe pdf format to enable students to browse through available vacancies and match their requirements via the user-definable Job Classification Criteria flags.

Extended Features in Version 11.3b

- The Jobs module now automatically records the date a Job is Posted on the system, has a toggle flag to record whether Online applications are required, as well as Finish Date and Job Summary fields. Relevant details are automatically inserted from the Jobs record when a new placement is created. Perhaps the most significant change is the addition of two User-definable look-up's, initially defined with prompts "Job Sector" and "Job Type". Users may define an unlimited number of entries for these fields to give significantly increased flexibility when matching jobs to students. A new "Compact" Jobs report has also been added following a request from a customer.

- All PineSoft printed output now uses Arial fonts in line with current recommended good practice.

I hope that you find that the new features will make PineSoft an even better tool in coping with the extensive tasks you face as Placement Managers.

Best wishes.

Dr Stuart K Donald