

In this issue:

Free Xero for our clients
Investments

Tech Corner
Junk faxes

Important Reminders

Terminal tax for the year ended
31 March 2008 needs to be paid
by 7 April 2009.

Now that Christmas and New Year are well out of the way its time to think about your accounts for the next tax year. To help with this we are pleased to be able to offer the cashbook version of Xero free as part of our services and the full version for half price.

Read on...

Free Xero for our clients

Xero is an online accounting system. It's pretty hard to get excited about accounting systems but Xero is different from the rest – for a start it's easy to use, produces up to date and useful reports and is a genuine time saver. Clients of ours using Xero love it.

One of its best features is that bank statements arrive in Xero automatically each day and all you need to do to keep track of things is to tell Xero what the transactions were for. Xero will remember your choices so after a while all you do is just click OK to accept the suggested coding.

Other advantages are that as it is an online system you can get to it from any place that has an internet connection (even your PDA), there is no software to install and upgrade and you don't have to worry about backups.

... and it prints your GST returns for you too.

What's the difference between the cashbook version and the full version?

The cashbook client is a simplified version of Xero and is available only through Xero partners for their clients. The main differences between it and the full Xero version are that in the cashbook version:

- You can't change the chart of accounts or add items to the dashboard. These need to be set up by your accountant.
- You can't create invoices for accounts receivable or accounts payable.
- There is an "Ask your Accountant" option on the help menu – this sends questions to us via email.

Why do we offer it to our client free?

We believe that Xero is a quality accounting system that can make your lives easier. We are offering the cashbook version to our clients at no cost as we think the time it will save us when preparing the end of year accounts will cover what we have to pay for it.

Is it right for me?

If you are a sole trader, company, or a Trust and have more than a few transactions each month and you are not using an accounting system (or don't like the one you have) then you should consider Xero.

What if I want the full version?

As a Xero partner we can offer our clients the full version of Xero for \$25 plus GST per month (the normal cost is \$49 plus GST per month). *If you want this discounted rate you do need to sign up before 1 April 2009.* You then keep this rate for as long as your organisation is on our billing plan.

If you send out a lot of invoices and want to track your debtors through Xero then you will probably find the full version well worth it.

What do I need?

You need an internet connection (preferably broadband) and a computer (PC, Mac or Linux). That's about all. Once set up to get the best out of Xero you should logon and reconcile your transactions at least once a month. It's so quick you will probably find yourself doing it each day or two.

Will I need training?

It's up to you really. Our getting started guides and the online help in Xero are generally enough to get you going. We can provide one-on-one training and are also looking at providing a free getting started training session in conjunction with Xero some time in April.

Where can I find out more about Xero?

Visit www.xero.com and read all about it there and watch the getting started video. You can sign up for a free demo company to try it out.

We also have Xero guides and frequently asked questions on our website – www.dowsemurray.co.nz on the Resources and FAQs pages.

I think I want it - what do I do next?

Email (info@dowsemurray.co.nz) or call us (04 971-1600) and we will go from there. The best time to change over is as of the start of the next financial year on 1 April 2009. To have you up and running for 1 April we would like to get you set up in Xero **by the end of February**.

Investments

In keeping with the Xero (NZX XRO) theme CEO Rod Drury will be speaking to the Wellington Branch of the NZ Shareholders Association on Tuesday 10th February at 6:30pm. He is a great speaker and has a great story to tell. Guests are welcome so if you are interested in coming along

and also meeting other investors then contact martin@dowsemurray.co.nz.

Tech Corner

When you buy a new PC it will usually come loaded with a virus checker (e.g. Nortons) that expires after a few months and then asks you to register and pay money to keep it going.

You do need a virus checker but if it's for personal use there are some ***good free products*** and if its business use they are not too expensive – we list three of these on our web site www.dowsemurray.co.nz on the resources page.

Of these Avira is probably the most effective but it has an annoying nag screen that prompts you to buy it each time it updates so for ease of use go for Avast or AVG. Our personal preference is Avast, it's a bit less intrusive than AVG but you do have to email for a registration code each year.

Remember when changing virus checking programs download the new one to your PC (but don't install it), de-install the old virus checker (even if it has expired) and then install the new one. You will probably need to restart the PC several times in the process.

Are you plagued by Junk Faxes?

We have been getting unsolicited faxes advertising directory listings and government surplus auction catalogues. After registering a complaint at the Advertising Standards Authority we were directed to www.marketing.org.nz where we registered on the "Do not mail" and "Do not call" pages. A helpful person there also contacted the sender of the faxes (an Australian organisation Consumer First - 0800 931 012) on our behalf and the faxes have stopped. Try it out yourself. When calling Consumer First ask for Charles Cunningham Smith and tell him you want your fax number taken off their list.