Stock Explorer FAQ

What are your rates for software and hardware design?

Saturn Solutions charges £400 per full days printed circuit board design or software design service. These initial costs may be reduced by amortising them into product costs when the item goes into production.

Can I configure my printed documents to my specific requirements?

You can configure documents (purchase orders, delivery notes etc.) to include your company logo and any specific information you require. It is also possible to re-arrange the placement, size and style of the text. This is discussed in Section 16 of the user manual 'Customising Printed Documents'. Making sufficient changes to these documents can be time consuming. Saturn Solutions can configure these documents for you to resemble any printed samples that you wish to supply.

Can I create documents in PDF format and send them in emails?

An automated email feature is available to generate and email PDF files. When set up, this feature replaces the built-in email option for purchase orders and is also available for delivery notes and customer orders (order acknowledgements). Simply right-click a purchase order, delivery note or customer order and select the 'Send via email' option. The document will be prepared and printed as a PDF format file and saved as;
'\<Application Folder>\<Database Name>\PPnnnnnn.PDF', where PP is a type prefix (PO, DN or CO) and nnnnnn is the document number. An email will then be composed and the document attached, ready for sending.

In order to use this feature, you must have a suitable PDF printer installed on your machine. A PDF printer is potentially suitable if it can be configured to open a dialog prompting for a filename whenever you try to print it. In must not prompt for any other information or open a view window after printing.

Saturn Solutions has tested this feature using the Adobe driver (Adobe PDF) and using CutePDF (CutePDF Writer).

If you use a configurable driver such as Adobe, it must be set to prompt for a PDF file name and NOT to view the PDF results. The process is as follows:

Stock Explorer attempts to print the document using the PDF Printer.
The printer application opens a 'save' dialog box prompting for a filename for the document.
Stock Explorer enters the required file name by sending characters as if they were being typed by the user.
Stock Explorer sends a carriage return to close the dialog and save the file.
Stock Explorer compiles an email and attaches the saved file.

At the time of writing, CutePDF is free and worked well in our tests. It is available from www.cutepdf.com; simply download and install CutePDF Writer AND the free Ghostscript converter.

In Stock Explorer, open the general properties panel ('preferences' tab), select an available PDF Printer and click OK. If your operating system does not place the focus in the file 'Save As' box of the dialog by default (Vista may not do this) then this adds a further complication. When Stock Explorer attempts to send the filename it will not get entered and the carriage return will not close the dialog. In this case, it is necessary to determine the number of 'tabs' required to navigate to the 'save as' box in the dialog.

Having determined the number, open the general 'properties' panel (preferences tab) and click the PDF Printer 'Configure' button. Enter the number of tab characters required and, if necessary, experiment with the dialog delay (starting with a long delay – maybe 20 seconds – and working down to find a minimum value that works reliably).

Since this feature uses a third-party PDF writer, correct functionality cannot be guaranteed. If you experience timing or linking problems, please contact Saturn Solutions for support.

Can I export information to my Sage Accounting system?

If you are using our 'Invoicing' module then you can use our 'Export to Sage Line50' feature. This feature may also work with other Sage products.

Customer Export;
This feature outputs all current customers. If only selected records are required, it will be necessary to manually edit the output file using Notepad or a similar text-editing utility. It is essential that the customer records contain an account reference as this is used by Sage to link customers referenced in invoice data to the relevant customer details. To be compatible with Sage, the reference should be no more than eight characters. To export customers, select the 'Customer Orders' or 'Customers' folder in the lower-left panel. Then open the 'file' menu and select 'Export to' – 'Sage Line50'.

Invoice Expert;
Invoice details are exported in batches. When a batch is exported, the records are date and time-stamped to prevent multiple exports of the same item. For the data transfer to be successful, critical fields in Stock Explorer must exactly match those in Sage Line50. Sage Line50 expects the following data;
Transaction Type, Account Ref., Nominal Code, Department Number, Transaction Date, Invoice Reference, Transaction Details, Net Amount, Tax Code, Tax Amount, Extra Reference, User Name.

The following table shows the relationships between Sage Line50 data and Stock Explorer data. Stock Explorer data is truncated to fit the Sage limits if necessary.

Field	Type	Size	Stock Explorer Field
Transaction Type	Char	2	None. This field is always 'SI' (Sales Invoice)
Account Ref	Char	8	Customer Account Number (first 8 characters)
Nominal Code	Char	8	Project Name. Projects should be created to echo the relevant nominal codes used by Sage. If a project has not been selected the specified default code will be inserted (see section 14).
Department Number	Int	3	Not used. this field is always '1'
Transaction Date	Date	10	Invoice Date
Invoice Reference	Char	8	Invoice Number
Transaction Details	Char	60	Invoice Description orInvoice Item Quantity, Name and Description
Net Amount	Double	11	Invoice Total or Invoice Item Total
Tax Code	Int	T0 - T99	Invoice Tax Code or Invoice Item Tax Code
Tax amount	Double	11	Invoice Tax Amount or Invoice Item Tax Amount
Extra Reference	Char	8	Not used
User Name	Char	32	Employee Last Name and First Name

To export invoice information, select the 'Invoices' folder in the lower-left panel. Then open the 'File' menu and select 'Export To' – 'Sage Line50'. This will open a preview form. By default, this list shows all invoices (or invoice items) yet to be exported. When exported, the items will be stamped with current date and time in order to avoid duplicates.

To re-export a previous batch of invoices, simply select the required invoice batch date and time. To set up your system for this feature, please refer to 'Configure Invoices' in section 15 of the user manual.

How do I import my pre-existing data into Stock Explorer?

Components, assemblies, suppliers and customers may be imported from appropriately formatted text files. See section 17 of the user manual for further information.

If you use parts lists, you can specify your own template for importing parts lists and assembly structures. Saturn Solutions can assist with this process and we will usually be able to import any data, even when it cannot be made to conform to the import requirements.

How do I work with 'Order Units'?

The 'Order Unit' is the unit by which an item is ordered (pack quantity, volume, weight etc.). The user may include the unit name (Litres, Kg etc.) if required.

Purchase items inherit this information when they are created, some care should be given to the contents of this field; if the value equates to a number (e.g. '1', '10' or '10 Litres'), when the goods are booked in they will be split into individual items (e.g. if the purchase quantity is 70 and the order unit is '10' the received quantity will be 70 units but the booked in quantity will be 700 items). If the value equates to non-numeric text (e.g. 'Reels' or 'Reel, 50m') the order unit will be treated as one item.

What are the system requirements for running Stock Explorer?

Microsoft Windows NT, 2000, XP, Vista, &
SVGA display (minimum 1024x768 resolution, 16 bit colour recommended)
100Mb of hard disk space
A MAPI-compliant email system must be in place to make use of the Stock Explorer email option.
A compatible PDF printer (e.g. Adobe PDF or CutePDF Writer) is required if documents are to be created as PDF email attachments (see appendix 1 in the help file).

When do I need the Warehouse option?

The standard system allows each stock item to be assigned to a single fixed location. Any received item is assumed to be located there. Also there is no intrinsic link between a received item and a delivered item (except when a serial numbers are assigned), stock is simply booked in an out. This makes for a simple process with minimal user input.

The warehouse option allows any batch of received goods to be placed anywhere in one or more locations. When items are delivered they must be explicitly picked from the warehouse, so you have the opportunity of specifying (and recording) which specific item is to be delivered.

Warehouse views make it easy to see where all your stock is physically located and to use old stock first etc.

Why is the Stock Explorer main screen split into four sections?

The left-hand panels are for navigation purposes and show how the various data views are structured. You can always check what list you are viewing by looking for the current open folder in the left panel. Clicking on a folder in the left panel will show the folder contents in the adjacent pane.

The right-hand panels show lists of selected information. The lists can be sorted by any column simply by clicking on the required column header.

The upper and lower views are designed so that related information can be viewed simultaneously. For example; to add an item to a purchase order, simply locate the item in a stock view in the upper pane. Open the relevant purchase order folder in the lower view, add a new purchase order (right-click and select 'Add New'), then drag the item from the upper view into the open purchase order.

Why would I choose Stock Explorer Plus over the other Stock Control Software products?

Stock Explorer Plus is a highly configurable modular stock control system for manufacturers, distributors or warehousing operations. The modular approach means that it can be as simple or as complex as your requirements and budget dictate. If you are a manufacturing, distribution or warehousing operation then you can rest assured that you are getting a system designed specifically for use in your industry. The software has been constantly updated over the last few years in direct response to customers' requests. It is now a comprehensive tool that will improve on your company's efficiency whilst cutting costs and reducing waste.