White Paper

ARCS 2G: The Right Tool for Debt Collection Management

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Executive Summary

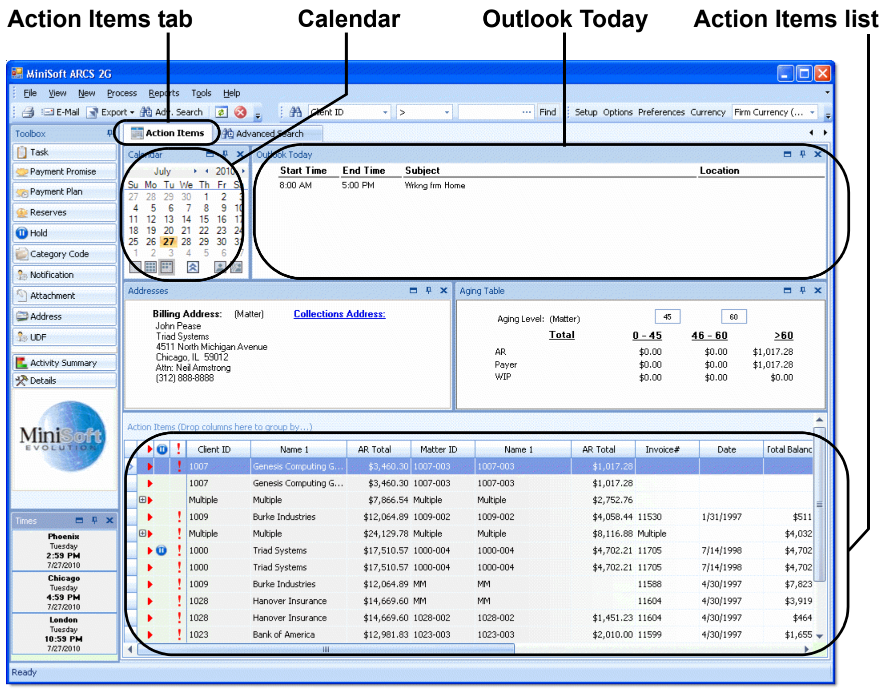
Debt collection and management are issues that affect service organizations across the business spectrum. Any organization that has delinquent accounts suffers doubly from decreased revenues and the cost of recovering payment. The solution to this problem is to take swift and early action using a tool designed specifically to manage collections.

That tool is ARCS 2G—Accounts Receivable Collections System, Second Generation. As a .Net application that partners with a billing system, ARCS 2G makes read-only account information available to a host of powerful collection and analytical tools. Account-specific tracking tools, extensive reporting and processing models, and exception management for high-risk accounts—all work together to reduce collection days and increase cash flow.

The following features distinguish ARCS 2G:

- **Scalability.** Accommodates any professional service firm—any size, locations, currencies.
- **Seamless integration with Microsoft Outlook.** Enables exchange of email and vital account information.
- **WIP tracking.** Anticipates and speeds billing.
- **Unlimited aging buckets.** Allows detailed tracking over extended age ranges.
- **Search/query functionality with drill-down.** Allows instant access to lower-level data.
- **Extensive selection of reports and charts.** Meet all informational and visual reporting needs—aging, general query, activity history, canned, etc.
- **Use of wizards.** Simplifies creation of batch processes and highly configured reports.
- **Internal metrics.** Days Sales Outstanding (DSO) and Collection Efficiency Index (CEI) reports demonstrate effectiveness of internal policies and staff performance.
- **Customizable account codes/database fields.** Enable tracking and reporting according to additional, user-defined attributes.
- **Tiered security.** Ensures executive and administrative oversight, while providing users with the tools to effectively perform their jobs.
- **Highly flexible user interface.** Accommodates the needs of individual users.

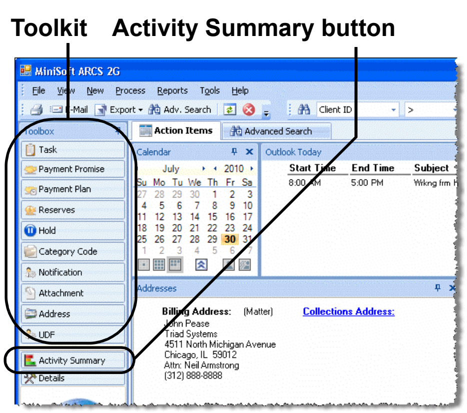
Assessing the Day's Tasks



On startup, ARCS 2G highlights the **Action Items** tab, which contains a series of panels alerting the user to must-do tasks.

The **Action Items** list contains the most important items: account-associated Tasks and Payment Promises that have come due. The list works in conjunction with the **Calendar**, which sets the viewing date, determining which Tasks and Promises appear. Items automatically appear according to due date, and then disappear when resolved (status = Done or Satisfied). **Addresses** and **Aging Tables** panels provide contact and aging information for the focused Task or Promise—without having to move to another window. The **Outlook Today** panel further expands the scope of the **Action Items** tab by displaying the user's all important work-day appointments.

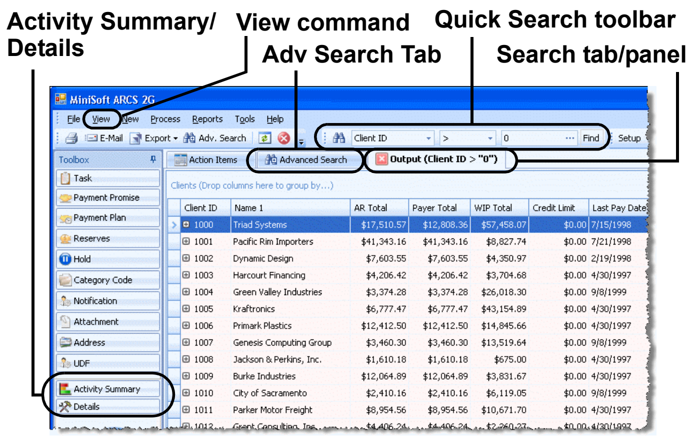
Taking Action



Often, after assessing the day's "must-do" items, the Collector goes directly to the **Toolkit**, which is exactly that—a kit of essential tools designed expressly to track accounts. Each button creates an account-associated record called an activity. Example activities are Tasks (e.g., Call Attorney), Payment Promises, and Addresses/Contacts. A Collector uses the **Toolkit** repeatedly as the day progresses—to flag an account as a slow payer, to create a Payment Promise, to add an account contact name, to put a Hold on an AutoProcess that would otherwise send an account a 60-day letter.

Directly below the Toolkit is the **Activity Summary** button, which displays a history of all tracking activities for the currently highlighted account. All activities can be viewed in a single list, or viewed separately by type. Each list can be sorted by column according to **Status** or **Date**, for example. For any single account, the **Activity Summary** panel provides an overview of all tracking activity and immediate access to fine detail.

Extracting and Viewing Information



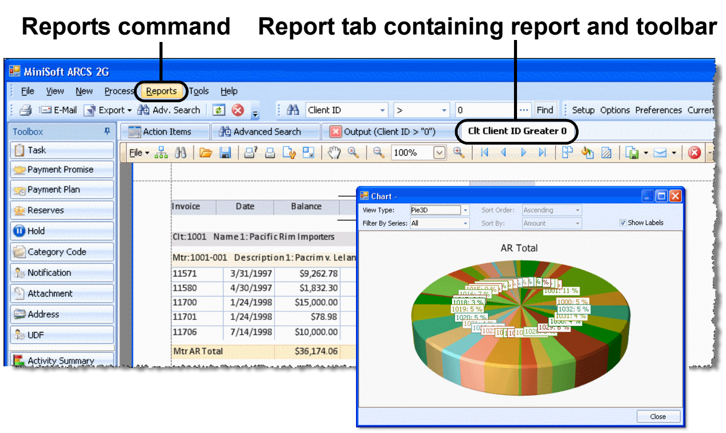
Searches provide a primary means of getting information. Quick searches use a single field (e.g., Client ID) and are performed through the **Quick Search** toolbar. Advanced Searches typically use multiple fields and output options (grouping, sorting, etc.) and are performed in the **Advanced Search** tab.

Search results appear in a tabbed panel, which can be extensively formatted through grouping, filtering, sorting, etc. If the search produces multiple record levels, a click expands the list to show the next lower level. Multiple searches can remain open simultaneously, each displayed in a separate tab. And Advanced searches can be saved, emailed, and run repeatedly.

In addition to viewing search results, details for any account are readily accessible through three main screen buttons/commands:

- The **Activity Summary** button. Displays the entire activity history.
- The **Details** button. Displays all account information—AR, WIP, Timekeepers, Last Pay Date, processing holds, all contact information, etc.
- The **View** command in the Main menu. Allows viewing of activities, and of account-related records according to level (Client, Matter, Invoice).

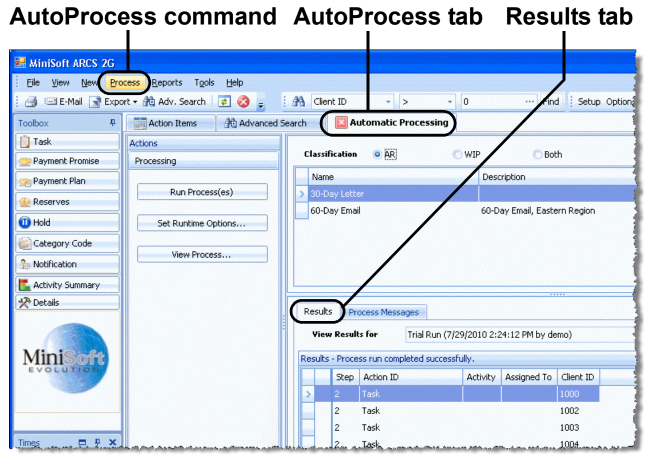
Presentation and Analysis



A wide selection of reports—Aging (Quick and Advanced), General Query (Quick and Advanced), Predefined (canned), and Collections Activity—make ARCS 2G a presentation and analysis powerhouse. Reports are created and run through the **Reports** command in the Main menu. All but Quick reports are created with a wizard, and can display associated activities and charts (if desired).

Like searches, report results appear in a tab. Because reports are documents, report options include an expanded set of document properties. Also, each report tab contains a toolbar that allows addition or modification of properties, emailing, export to other file formats such as Excel, etc. Like searches, multiple report tabs can remain open for easy comparison of results. Any report chart can be converted on-the-fly from one type to another (e.g., from a Line chart to a 3D Pie chart). Each report template (definition) and date-specific run can be saved for later access.

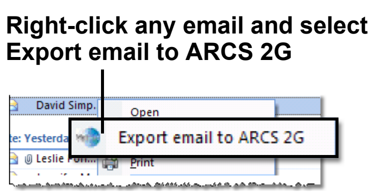
Automatic Processing



AutoProcesses perform one or more batch actions automatically, for example, sending email or reminder letters at 30 and 60 days.

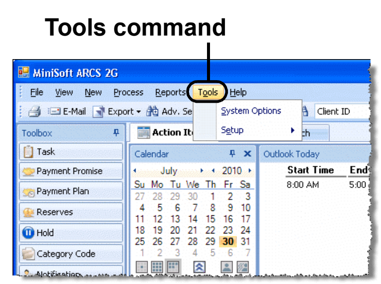
AutoProcesses are created and run through the **Processes** command (in the Main menu) and **AutoProcess** tab. Like many reports, all are created through a wizard. Processes can be run in three modes (test to full run), reversed (backed out), and "cleaned" of zero-balance accounts. Each run updates a log that records the account's position in the process cycle—which step was run, the next step to be run, the next possible run date. The beauty of an AutoProcess is that the process itself knows which accounts should be acted on. The user simply clicks **Run Process** at regular intervals—or schedules the process to run automatically as a scheduled event.

Integration with Microsoft Outlook



Microsoft Outlook is tightly integrated with many ARCS 2G functions. The **Outlook Today** panel is just the beginning. Exporting email from Outlook to an associated account in ARCS 2G creates an Email Attachment activity, which is then accessed through the **Activity Summary** button—extending ARCS 2G's role as a repository of vital account information. And in the other direction, ARCS 2G can email any account activity, any advanced search, and any report. Finally, any AutoProcess can create email output, as well as email other types of output.

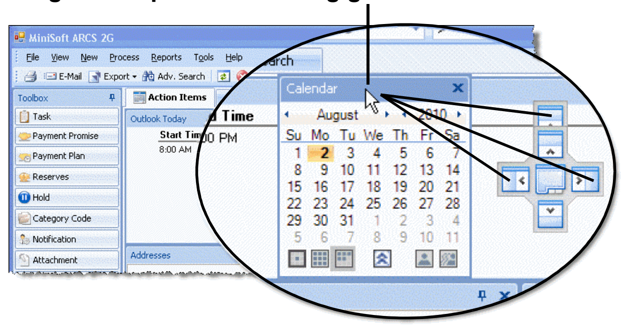
Security and Access



Every ARCS 2G user is a password-enabled member of a Security Group—a group of users having a specific set and level of privileges that control access to all areas of the ARCS 2G application. Users, Security Groups, and user assignments (which further control which accounts the user has access to) are set up through the **Tools** command in the Main menu. Security functions ensure that sensitive information is generated and/or viewed by authorized personnel only, that administrative functions are carried out by qualified System Administrators, and that Collectors have the necessary focus and tools to perform their jobs.

Flexibility

Drag cursor/panel to docking guide



The final element in creating an application that works on multiple levels for multiple users is flexibility of the user interface. On opening ARCS 2G the first time, all users see the layout shown in the first figure on page 1. But this layout is only the default. To accommodate individual needs, each panel can be resized, can “float” unanchored in the window, or be dragged to a different location. On exit, the altered layout is saved with the user’s personal settings. The next time the user opens the application, the altered layout appears. The default layout is easily reset by clicking **View** > **Reset Panel Layout**.