

## From the Directors' Desks

This should be a full scale newsletter but we are busy with annual accounts and just wanted to send you all a quick update.



## Annual Accounts Progress

Our amazing team are on track to have all 296 annual accounts completed for audit by the 31<sup>st</sup> March, with the first days of April possibly needed for the new schools that came to us this year when their financial service provider closed the accounts division.



Thank you for responding quickly to any requests from us for additional information and your assistance with uploading information to Xero files. The use of that facility has made a great difference to efficient working for us and hopefully for you too.

## Reassurance and Keeping Business As Usual

Solutions and Services has a plan in action for keeping our team safe, and continuing our services to you in as normal a way as possible through the developing Covid-19 situation.

Many of our team work from home offices anyway, more staff are choosing to now, and we can have everyone work remotely if necessary. We have stopped all travel and on-site appointments

We are very fortunate in that the majority of our services can be delivered remotely – from annual and monthly accounts, to training and support using our Teamviewer licenses. Over 90% of our client schools are using an on-line accounting system. We can move the remaining schools using Financial Manager at their chosen time in Term 2, and will encourage the final few to consider this sooner than Term 4.

Xero and Monty allow us to support schools all over New Zealand so easily and also allow school finance staff to work from home if required. We've never been more pleased that we have transitioned so many schools.



Even if schools are closed for students and staff to self-isolate, there will still be administration functions that need to continue. Schools with on-line accounting and student management systems are much better placed to allow staff to continue to work from home. That also allows for their employment to continue.

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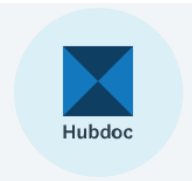
## Our Focus until 03 April

We have to use every day and every hour for the annual accounts task and so we need to defer any responses to schools regarding new services or their draft annual accounts, to auditors regarding first queries sent, and anything else possible. We will ensure that we respond in April – be reassured!

## Changes to Xero pricing and Hubdoc

### Xero licensing increase

In November 2019 Xero informed all partners that the monthly license fee for Xero was to increase by \$2 per month from April 2020. This is the first increase for some time and is obviously minimal. It also equates to the \$2 per month that was the 2019 introductory price for Hubdoc.



**As of 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020, Hubdoc is now included in Xero for all Standard plan users arranging Hubdoc through their Xero partner.**

**Solutions and Services has all schools on the Standard plan.**

**Some small associations may use the Starter plan – but it is too limited for schools.**

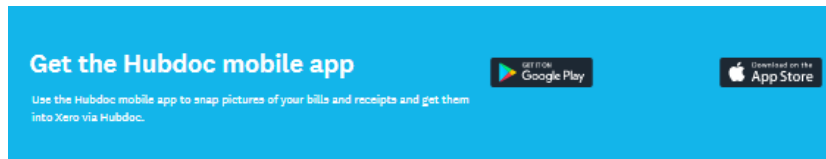
At the time we heard of the fee increase, we had already invoiced our schools for the 2020 annual license fee subscriptions for Xero, Monty, Hubdoc and ApprovalMax.

Ann and I decided not to bother sending out small extra invoices to over 300 clients and honour the existing arrangements that you had already budgeted for.

### Hubdoc and ApprovalMax and the increased advantages for those working remotely

We do not want this advice below to be seen as taking advantage of the pandemic – that is not intended.

However, schools that have informed their suppliers to send all invoices to the school's Hubdoc email address have the most efficient way to enter Bills into Xero already set up.



Senior management staff with credit cards can have the Hubdoc mobile app on their phones and the receipt/tax invoice just appears in Hubdoc. The supplier invoices are coded, with Xero artificial intelligence assisting, and appear in Xero – with the pdf of the invoice attached – ready to approve and pay.

Suppliers can be emailed the school's Hubdoc contact email easily using an exported Contact file from Xero if email addresses are loaded as you have created Batch Payments and used Remittance Advices.

Teaching staff and other budget-holders can be instructed to forward any supplier invoices that may have come to them directly (not the preference) to the 'Finance' email address. You simply forward to Hubdoc.

If you want to start using Hubdoc, as it is now included with Xero and to allow you to work more easily remotely, please email [admin@solutionsandservices.co.nz](mailto:admin@solutionsandservices.co.nz) We will arrange Hubdoc setup for you and remote training in April. The training is chargeable, but requires less than an hour online in Teamviewer.

Have a look at the Hubdoc link below if you are interested and email us if you want to go ahead.

<https://www.xero.com/nz/features-and-tools/accounting-software/hubdoc/>

**ApprovalMax** takes remote accounting for schools to the next level.

The schools that have decided to implement Hubdoc and ApprovalMax have been mostly secondary schools to date, but we are receiving more enquiries now as the need to work remotely and keep staff safe becomes more apparent.



There is a fee for ApprovalMax, and some set up time required. The monthly fee is \$45.60 + GST.

The schools that use it are sold on the efficiency and tell us that they see the license fee as well worthwhile.

In brief, ApprovalMax enables:

- on-line approval of invoices (laptop or mobile phone) by teachers and other budget holders
- on-line approval by Principals and senior staff with finance approval responsibilities
- on-line approval by Board members if required for amounts over a school threshold
- budget holders retain copies and records of all invoices
- the purchase order facility can be enabled if wanted in the application (optional)
- bills can still be edited in Xero. The three applications synchronise (Xero/Hubdoc/ApprovalMax)
- a very tight audit trail is provided in Xero with evidence of all approvals
- the need to have paperwork and be at school, onsite, and printing can be avoided or reduced
- chasing teaching staff and budget holders for invoices is no more – reminders are sent !

<https://www.approvalmax.com/>

If you would like to set up ApprovalMax and subscribe through Solutions and Services the license for April to December 2020 would be \$410.40 + GST. Our estimate of on-line time if you would like help to set it up is between 1.5-4 hours depending on how much you would like to do yourself. Please email [admin@solutionsandservices.co.nz](mailto:admin@solutionsandservices.co.nz) We will book set ups and training from April once our current commitments for annuals clients are completed.

## Wagging the tail

Continuing the story of Jake’s adventures.... (of which there are many!)

We have always added a section on Jake to our newsletters and this should be no exception.

He is not that pleased with us at present as we all sit at our desks far too much and don’t play enough.

Luckily Izaak takes him for a walk first thing each morning. Jake waits patiently on the mat for 8.30am but can’t understand why others are coming to work at 7am in March and his routine is out of kilter!

Then Kirsten from Superior Petcare picks him up mid-morning for a long run, or a swim, or a forest explore with his playmates each day. Lucky boy!



Flash in his new Xero bandanna – but looking bored. Ann has a store of treats scattered under her desk, but I am sure if he could tell us Jake would just say that we are all extra boring in Term 1!

**And finally, stay healthy and resilient through the challenges of the next few months. We hope that your families and friends overseas or in NZ are all safe and ok too. Stay socially connected and play in our own beautiful backyard.**

**Best wishes from Sandy and Ann and all at S&S**

