

Retailman POS Multi-location Setup

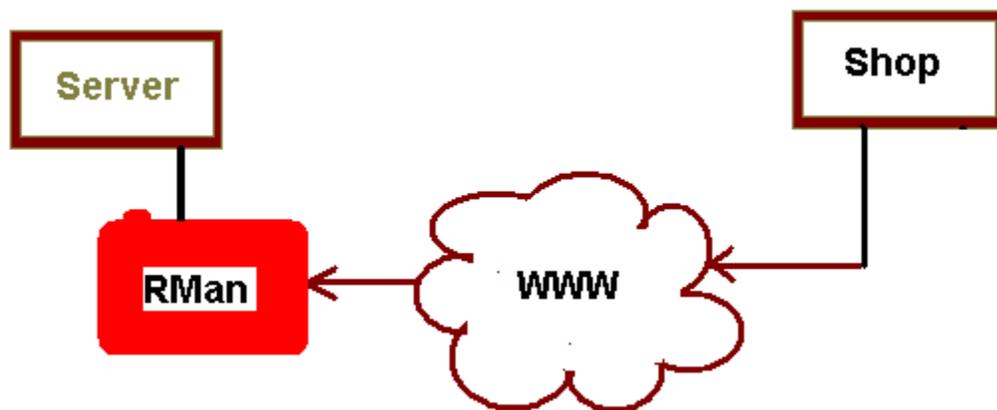
The new version of Retail Man of 1.90 and above has a new way of setting up the multi-location version. There are new components that have to be taken in to account and depending on the way the locations are connected, the setup will vary accordingly. This document will not discuss the details of the hardware setup, this is left to the user to decide.

The following is a summary on how to setup Retail Man and how to exchange data between the locations:

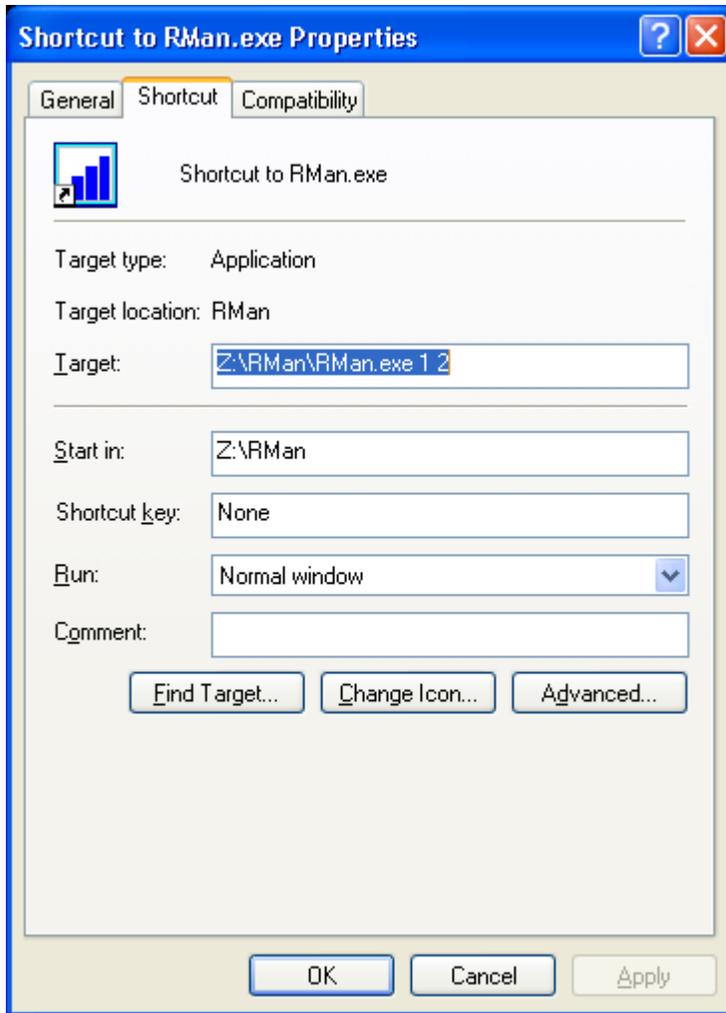
Scenario 1

Two or more locations are connected using a Virtual Private Network which is on all the time. The user must choose one of the locations to act as the Server, which will host the Retail Man folder and all its associated files, all the files will reside in a folder called RMAN, the server can be also a station with full network access to the other users on the network.

Setting up this configuration is the easiest, it also have the advantage of running all shops on line so all transactions from all locations will be saved immediately and all other locations can view the data live. To setup this configuration, run the setup program on the server, then make the server hard disk drive shareable. Make sure the VPN is properly setup and configured and the remote locations can see the server hard disk drive as a network drive (we will call it Z:\), then we will now proceed to setup the remote stations:



- 1- Create a short cut on the remote station disk-top to point to the RMan.exe on the server as shown in the following screen:



Note the text following the Rman.exe in the Target Field (called Parameters), these two figures are to assign the station number and the location number, this will be the case on all RMAN short cuts, so the RMan shortcut have 3 options to choose the station number (1 to 99), location number (1 to 99) and a valid path to where the data resides, so we can write the above shortcut as follows:

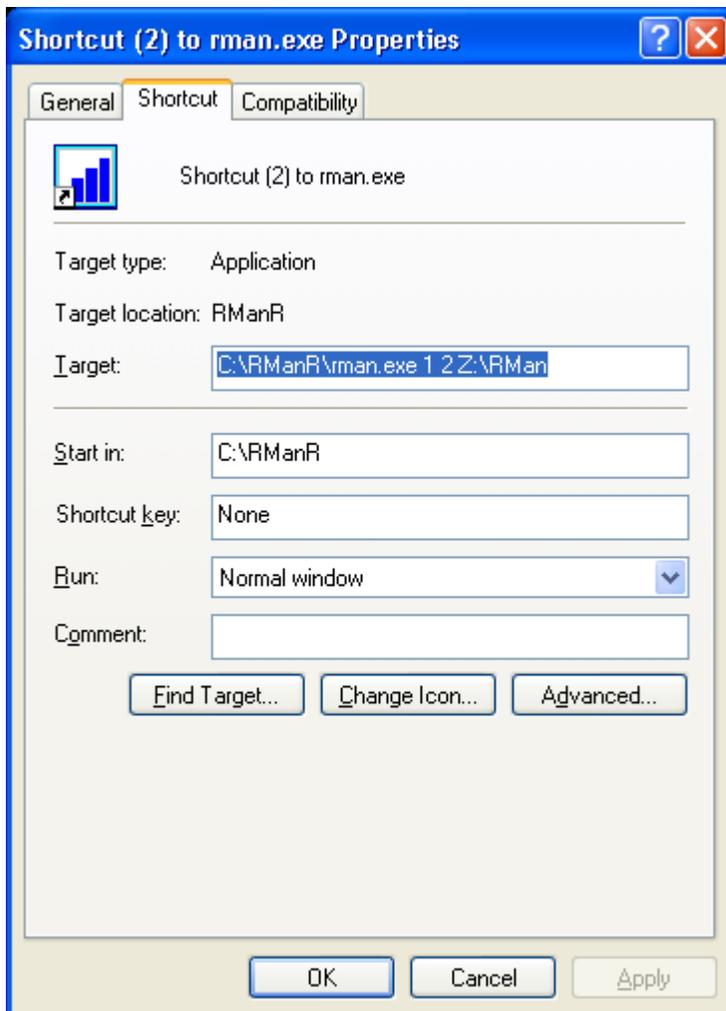
Z:\RMan\RMan.exe 1 2 Z:\RMan

If you leave the parameters blank, RMan will replace the station number with 1, location number with 1 and the default working directory as where the RMAN starts.

However, starting the RMAN program will take a while since it has to download the entire EMan.exe from the server to the remote location, so to speed up the running of the program and conserve time and data transfers, create a new folder on your local hard disk (you can name it anything, but for our example we will call it **C:\RMANR** (for RMan Remote), then we need to copy the RMan.exe file in to that folder, you may need to also copy the following support files:

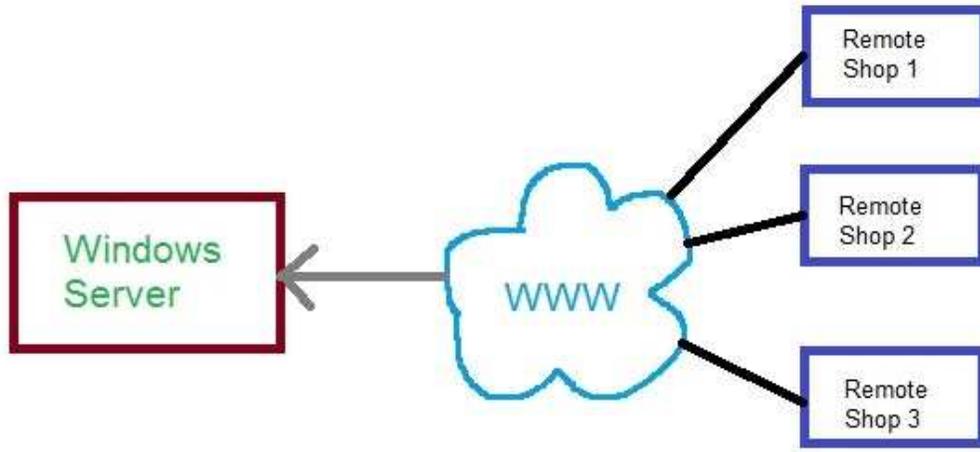
- 1 - VFPxR.DLL
- 2 - VFPxRENU.DLL
- 3 - VFPxRUN.EXE

To setup the remote station to access the RMAN.EXE using this new configuration, all what you need to do is create a shortcut as before, but in the Target enter **C:\RMANR\RMan.exe 1 2 Z:\RMan**, this will tell the program to start RMan from the local hard disk drive, but set the default data folder to the Z:\RMan drive, you will notice the start up speed is greatly improved since the system will load the program from the local hard disk drive.



Scenario 2

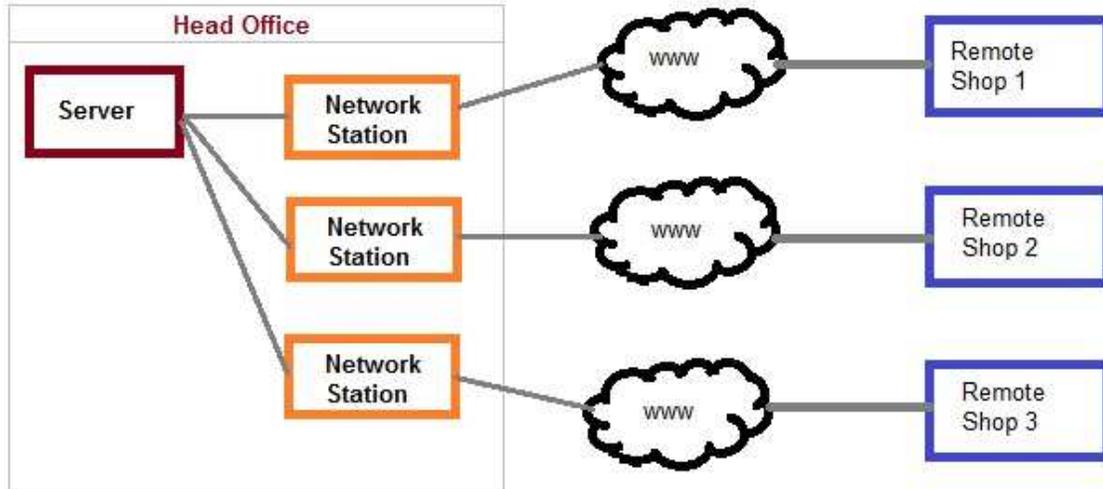
Using Remote desktop software, this can be done in two ways:



1 – Using Windows Server 2003 or above, this will allow remote users to connect to the server using remote desktop, this means that all the processing is done on the server and the remote user will only exchange the key strokes and the screen refresh from the server while all the data is safe on the server.

The setup is fast and secure but will require a proper setup of the server side and also the remote locations to be able to communicate with the server.

2 – Using extra network computers at the head office side



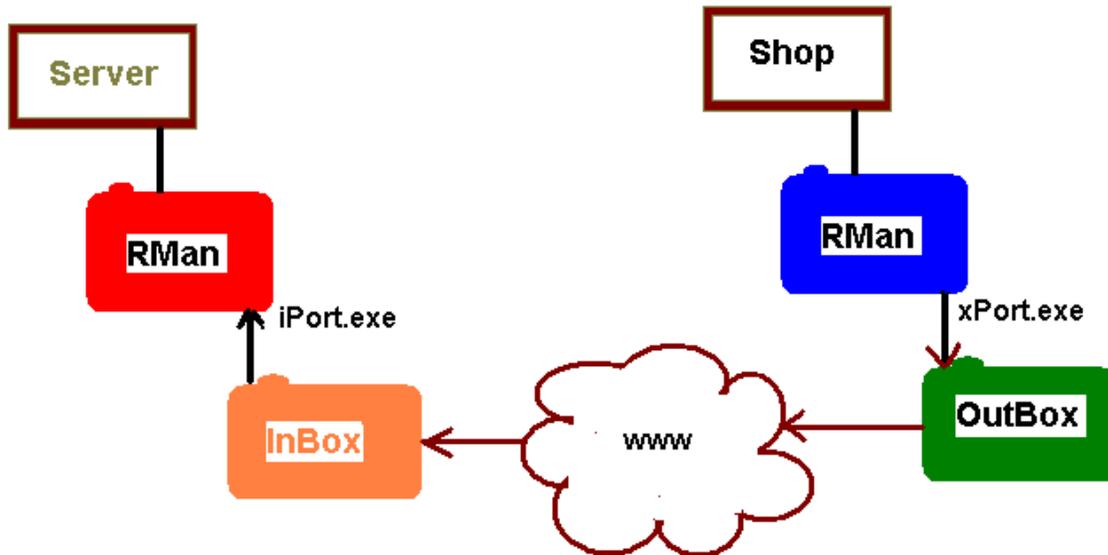
Using extra network computers at the head office side to act as remote desktop hosts, this will allow users from the remote locations to use their favorites remote desktop program such as logmein, teamviewer, PcAnywhere or similar programs to connect to the head office and run the program from the head office on line, again all the processing is done in the head office and all transactions are logged in live so all remote locations will be able to track all sales from other locations as well as new stock and pricing is done live.

On the positive side of this setup, all data updates are done on the local network in the head office, so even if there was communication disruption, the data is safe and secure, also the data is updated as transactions are done and every one on the system can see the whole updates. It is also fast and secure.

On the negative side, it cost more money as every station on the remote location requires another one in the head office side.

Scenario 3

The remote locations do not have a stable VPN to the server, in that case, it is better to setup RMAN on each individual location separately, if the remote location requires more than one station, then the normal multi-user setup is applicable, whereby, one system acts as the server, and the other are stations, then, just create a shortcut to the RMAN pointing to the local server.



However, this setup requires data transfers to occur to refresh the files on all locations, to accomplish that, there are extra support files that come with the system and have different uses, these files are discussed below.

A Summary of the operation of such a setup is as follows:

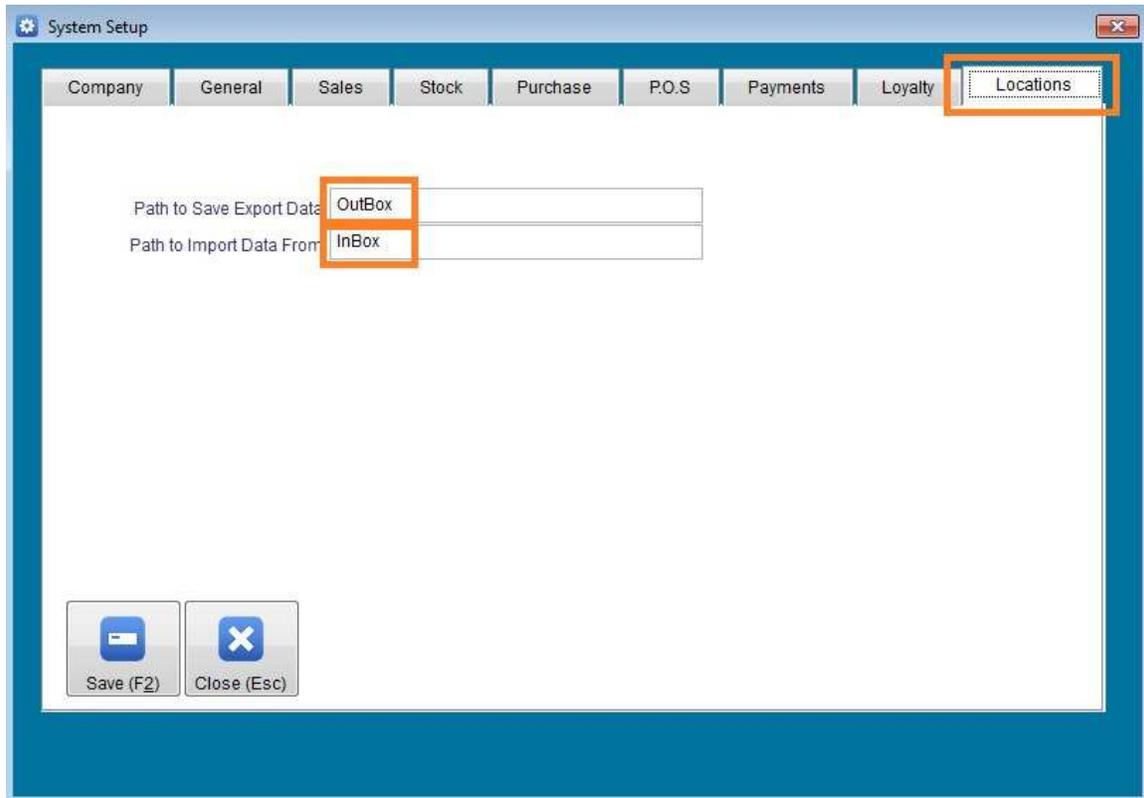
- 1 – Remote location runs xPort.exe to export the data to a chosen location
- 2 – Head office server runs iPort.exe to import the data generated remotely by xPort.exe
- 3 – Head office server runs CopyStock.exe to copy the stock file from server
- 4 – Each remote location runs GetStk.exe to download the latest stock data from server

It is up to you on how you want to move the files from the OutBox on the remote locations to the InBox to the server, but there are a number of ways this can be done, such as using Open-ssh, PcAnywhere, FTP, VPN, by email, USB drives to do local copy etc.,

The best is using Wide area network and you just assign a network drive to the server, but this requires fixed IP address and can be costly, the second best option is by using an FTP server to shuttle the data across automatically and with little user intervention, however, you must have an FTP server, the good news is most users who have a web site will already have an FTP server with their account that they can use to accomplish this.

Setting up Rman to use Multi-Location Features

To setup Rman for a multi-location operation, you will need to go to **Maintenance > System Setup > Locations** tab and enter the text “**OutBox**” in the Path to Save Export Data field and “**InBox**” in the Path to Import Data From then **save**.



On the next pages, we discuss the way to use the utility programs to setup the data transfer **from and to** the server and remote locations.

Please make sure to copy all the files that come with this package to the Rman folder on all locations including the server.

xPort.exe – This file is used to export the data from the remote locations each time it is run, it will ask for the “From” and “To Dates”, it also has two extra fields which are used to setup the local RMan.exe to export the data on regular bases.



From/To Date: These are optional fields that you need to use if you wish to extract transactions data that was missing or deleted by mistake, You can then press the Export to force the program to send the files to the outbox folder on your local machine.

Export Every: This is the number of minutes the system will export the data to the head office or FTP server, the ideal time is around 30 minutes. But can be from as little as one minute up to 24 hours. To change the current setting, double click on the field to enable it and then enter the new time duration.

Export Path / FTP: Double click on this field to enable.

If you are sending the files using Wide Area Network where the head office server is seen as a network drive, just enter full path (such as: Z:\Rman\Inbox)

If you are using other mediums such as an external hard disk drive of thumb drive, you can choose the folder to send the data to, then you have to manually transport that data and copy it to the Inbox folder on the server.

If you are using an FTP server, enter the server name, FTP user name and password for that FTP server, then the FTP server will act as an intermediate medium to store the data on to until the head office running iPort.exe is able to download it and process it.

Please note that if xPort.exe sends the data to the required medium, it will delete the local copy of the files in the outbox folder, also similarly, when the head office runs the iPort.exe, it will delete the files once they are imported to the live data files on the server.

Either way, if any errors occurs during the export or import operations, you can always re-create the files and resend them again to the server using the date range and the Export Button, you can do so as many times as you wish, as the iPort.exe is smart enough to compare date and time stamps of the files being imported and if its earlier or similar to the date time stamp on the server, no action will be taken, otherwise, the data will be imported and if its a newer version, it will delete the old one and create a new matching data instead.

User Name: Enter the user name to the FTP server. If you are not using an FTP server, then must leave it blank.

Password: Enter the FTP Password, again, if not using an FTP server, then just leave it blank.

Export Button: Pressing the Export button will cause the program to extract the transaction files between these two dates to the outbox folder on the local machine. The program will give you a warning before it does the export and ask your permission to proceed.

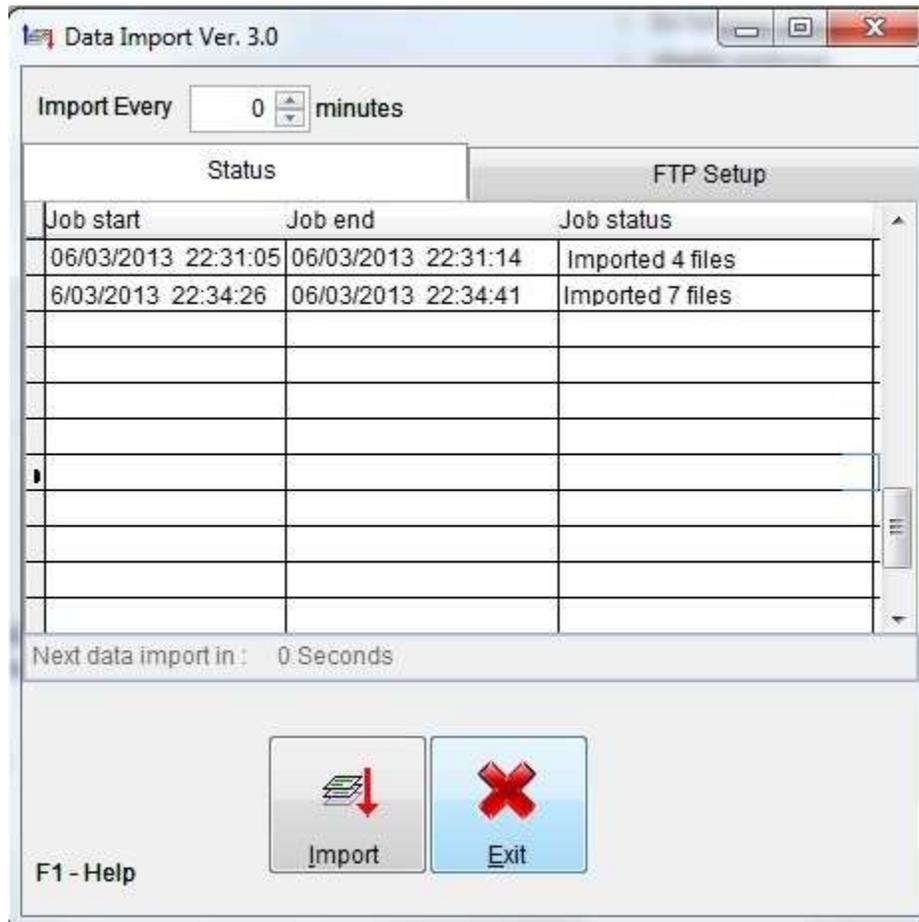
Upload Now button: Pressing the Upload Now button will send the files to the InBox folder in the head office's main server and wait for the server to run the iPort.exe to extract the files.

Note that if you are going to export the data at set intervals, then you will need to run xPort.exe and leave it running in the background so that it will send the data to the set destination at the set interval. This can be done during business hours or after work.

Once you set the timer on the program, you will notice the timer will count down then when its time, it will try to upload the files to the selected destination, if upload is successful, the files will be deleted from the local machine. So at the end of day, the outbox folder should be empty, indicating that all files were uploaded to the server.

On the Head office Side you will need to run the iPort.exe.

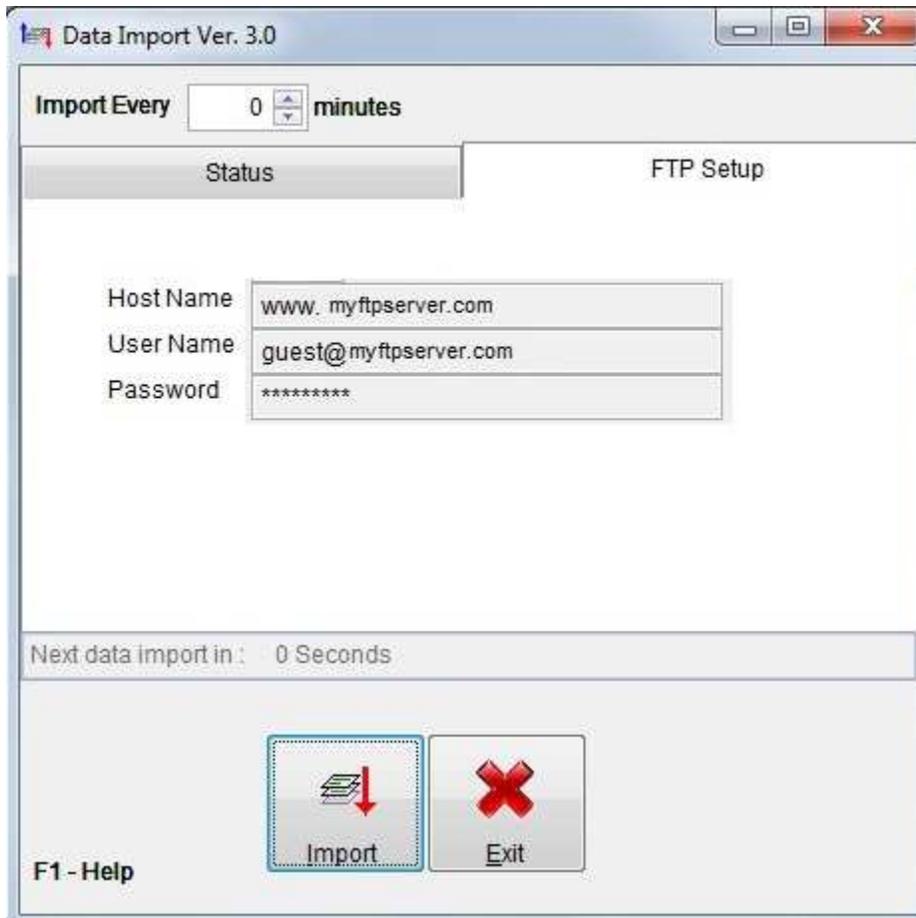
iPort.exe: This file should reside in the RMAN folder on the head office Server, it is used to import the data that was sent from the Outbox folder on the remote locations and saved in the InBox on the server.



There are two ways to run the program to import the data:

- 1 – Run the program as a command prompt using the Windows Schedule and make it run at a set intervals, this is normally the best if you wish to update the data at a certain time of the day but do not want the program to stay active for any number of reasons. So just create a short-cut to point to the iPort.exe and then modify the short cut to have extra parameters to tell the program to close after it executes, so just enter 0, space and 1 after the name as C:\Rman\iPort.exe 0 1
- 2 – Run the program interactively. To import now, just press the import button and the system will copy the data from the InBox to the live data files.

If you are importing the data from an FTP server, then you will need to match the FTP server parameters that were entered on the remote locations. To do that, click on the FTP tab and enter the FTP parameters in this screen to set the program to import correctly.



Once the programs are setup properly, then no or minimal user intervention will be required.

Additional Housekeeping Tasks

Once all the data from the remote locations are uploaded and updated on the server, then its time to send some of the files back to the remote locations to synchronize the data on all stations.

Some of the files that need to be sent to the remote locations from the Server are:

- 1 – STOCK.DBF
- 2 – STOCK.CDX
- 3 – STK_QTY.DBF
- 4 – STK_QTY.CDX
- 5 – DEBTORS.DBF
- 6 – DEBTORS.CDX
- 7 – STAFF.DBF
- 8 – QuickMnu.DBF

You must be aware that the server will have to take care of adding the new stock, clients and suppliers. Users in the remote locations will not be able to add stock, clients or suppliers as this is the job for the head office.

Also be aware to number the stations uniquely, starting from station number 1 on the server and continuing to station number 2 up to 99. this will give you more control of who did what, the same applies to the system users,

There are a couple of program **CopyStk.exe** (Used in head office to upload the needed files) and **GetStk.exe** (to run on the remote locations some time after the CopyStk.exe is run on the head office server) to copy the data from the server.

These programs can be run in either batch or interactive modes.

To use the CopyStk.exe, copy this file to the RMAN folder and run it from there, if you need to run it in batch mode, then you can include eight parameters to allow you to copy the needed files

Usage:

CopyStk.exe 1111111 Y

The ones can be replaced by zeros to block files from being copied, so if you do not need to copy the Stk_qty.dbf and the Stk_Hist.dbf then replace the parameters with

CopyStk.exe 10011111 Y

The parameters positions are:

- * 1= Stock.dbf file
- * 2= Stk_qty.dbf file
- * 3= StkHist.dbf file
- * 4= Debtors.dbf file
- * 5= Creditors.dbf file
- * 6= Staff.dbf file
- * 7= Company.dbf file
- * 8= QuickMnu.dbf file

If you run the program from Windows, it will produce the following screen:



Once the program is run, it will produce a zipped file called **NewFiles.zip**
This file needs to be copied to the stations and then run the program file called **GetStk.exe**

Both programs can be run with Rman active and no need to shut it down.

Copying Data from the server to the local machine

To copy the updated stock data (including the new stock and stock in other remote locations) you will need to run GetStk.exe some time after the server has run the CopyStk.exe, You can set up the system using Windows Scheduler to schedule it to run at the required time every day, then once setup, no other action is required.

Possible Scenario on setting up both server and remote location:

Server Side

00:00 Run iPort.exe to import data

01:00 Run CopyStk.exe to copy files
from server to synchronize remotes

Remote Location Side

xPort.exe is left running all day

02:00am – Run GetStk.exe to copy data
from server to local machine