Autoentry by Ocrex

Company Background

Autoentry is a solution offered by Ocrex, a company that specialises in the development of OCR software solutions. Autoentry was launched in early 2016 by company founder Brendan Woods as a solution to allow manual data entry to be automated using artificial intelligence (AI) and Optical Character Recognition (OCR) thereby saving small and medium businesses, bookkeepers and accountants valuable time.

The Product

Autoentry is a Cloud based product that allows the user to upload and extract information from sales and purchase invoices, receipts and bank/credit card statements and is operated on a monthly subscription basis using "credits". For example, one credit will allow you to upload 1 sales or purchase invoice, or receipt to be extracted. If you wish to have more than 1 line item extracted (i.e. the source document has more than one line of items on it this will cost 2 credits, (this is useful if you need to assign each line to a different VAT code or nominal code within your accounting software, but you can do this manually once the document has been processed to save 1 credit if you wish) and to upload bank and credit statements is 3 credits per page.

Autoentry integrates with Xero, Intuit Quickbooks Online, Sage One, Kashflow, Reckon Hosted, Reckon One, Sort My Books, Sage 50, Clearbooks, Accounts IQ, Freeagent, Fusemetrix and MYOB Account Right Live, which is quite an impressive array of accounting softwares both desktop and cloud based. You can also download the data as an .xls or .xlsx if you are using a spreadsheet based system. Files are accepted in PDF, TIFF, JPEG, .doc, .docx, .xls and .xlsx formats.

I trialled Autoentry with Intuit Quickbooks Online predominately and gave it quite a task of helping me move a client from another software package to Quickbooks Online. I also used it for my own bookkeeping for my company on Sage One and will continue to do so.

My first task was to set up my account which was very easy as part of the free trial process, after clicking the link for the free trial on the Autoentry website. You will need to enter the normal basic information to sign up as you would expect, your username will usually be set as your email address and you need to choose a password.

Once you have logged in you will see the dashboard which will list all of the companies you have created accounts for (see below for how to add a company). This is very simple and allows you to see company name, what software that company is integrated with, how many purchases, sales and bank/credit card statement items are waiting to be approved and published, how many people are assigned to the company and the admin email address.
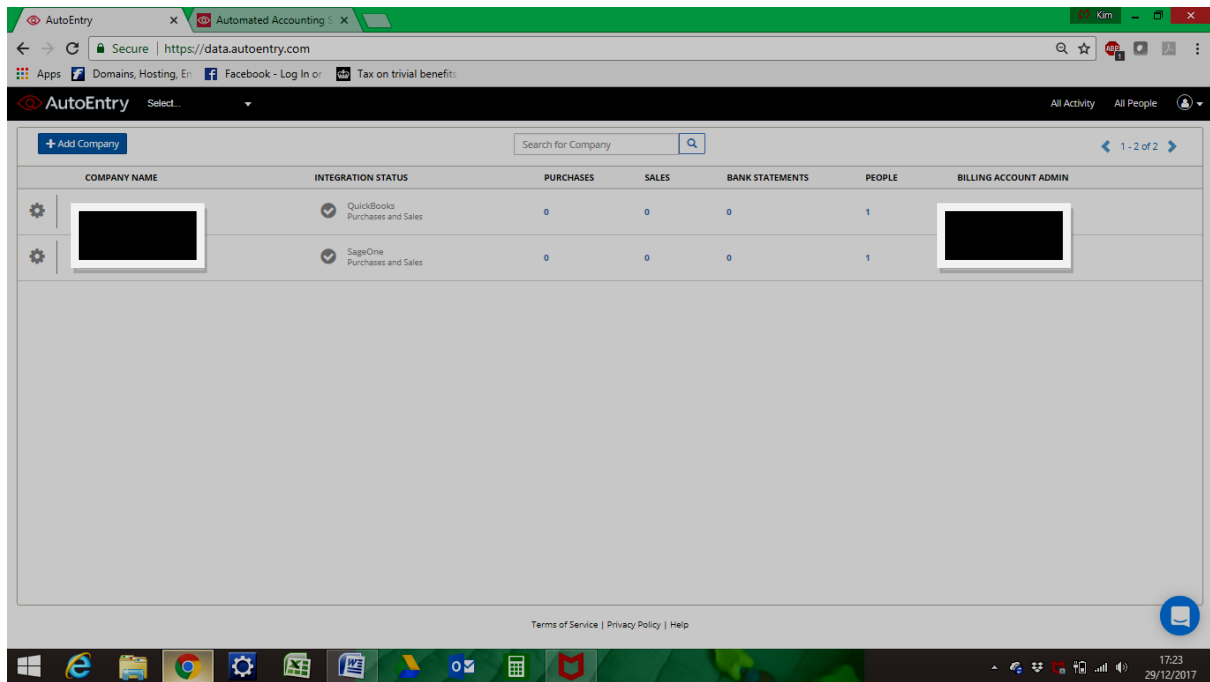
In the top left you can choose "select" to toggle between companies or choose from the list in the dashboard view. You can add a company by clicking on the blue "Add Company" button on the left. In the top right you can look at "All Activity" and search in uploaded and processed items, and look at and add to or remove user access under "All People" assigned to a company. If you click on the user icon in the top right you can access account settings, user profile, add a company or log out. It is a very simple interface and even for a first timer it is simple and intuitive to navigate around.

To add a company click on the "Add Company" blue button. There are three sections; "Add Company Details", "Mailbox Details" and Accounting Software Details". The "Add Company Details" section is self explanatory and you can choose in this section which user gets the notification emails for that company which is useful:
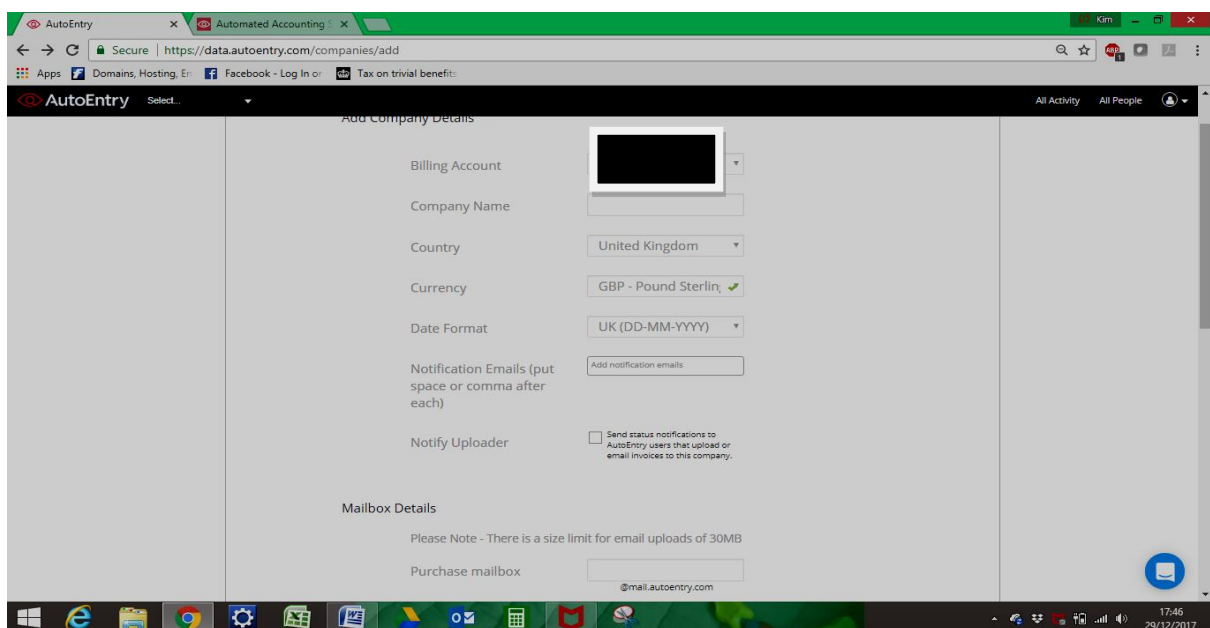
The "Mailbox details" section is also very simple and will auto fill an email address selection based on the company name filled in the first section (I chose Demo as the company name here so you can see it has created "Demo-" email addresses, this will be explained later on but essentially it is a dedicated email inbox for each client so documents can be emailed straight to Autoentry for processing). You can also choose whether multipage documents sent by email are processed as a single item, useful for mobile bills for example which can be several pages long:
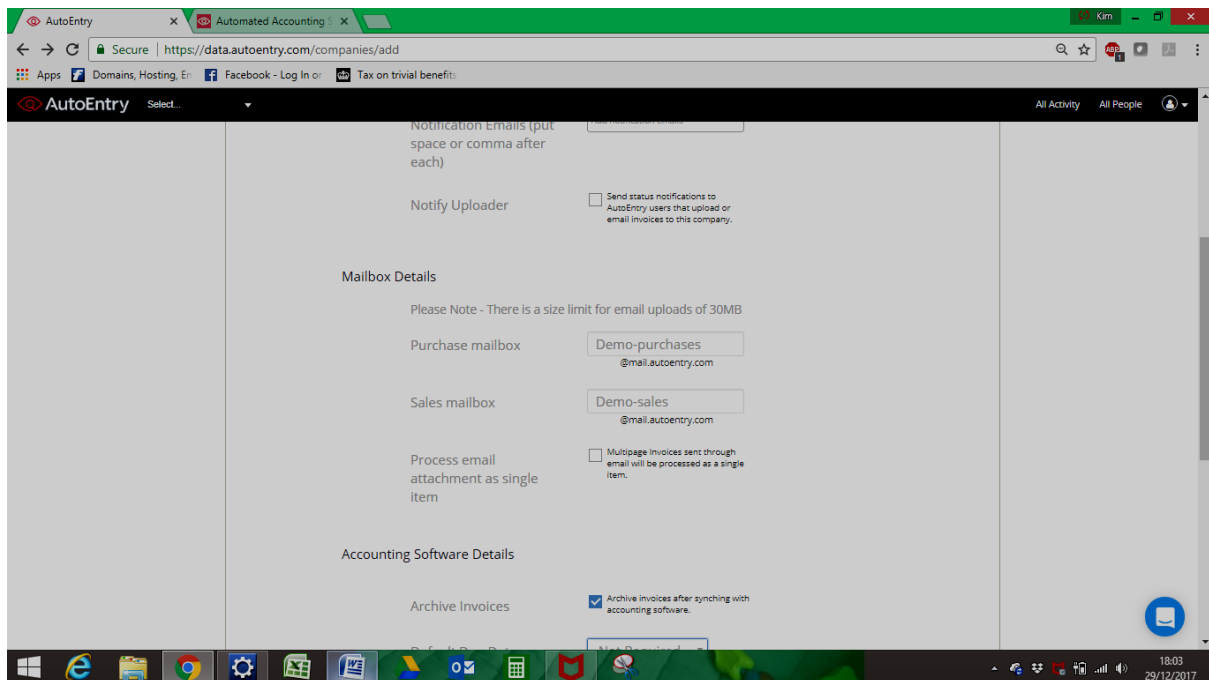

The "Accounting Software Details" section allows you to make choices about what happens when documents are published to the accounting software. I would recommend ticking the "Archive Invoices" box after synching with software as it makes it easier to see what has and has not been published through to software, as anything published will move to the "Archived" tab and you will be left with only those documents that still need publishing. There can be a bit of a time lag from publishing to the documents moving tab so beware of that.

You can choose whether to publish documents with default due dates or for sales invoices you can stipulate whether to enable due dates or not. You can also choose if you want to tag items according to the VAT period they relate to but I have to be honest I can't quite see the point of this if you are using accounting software. It would be more useful at this point in the process to stipulate if the company is VAT registered or not as the software assumes the company is VAT registered as default. You can only check a box to advise the company is not VAT registered by going back in to "Company Settings" once the company has been created which seems a bit longwinded when this is such an important question and effects data extraction significantly.

You can also choose if you would like Autoentry to suggest matches for extracted customer and supplier names. I said yes to this and I am glad I did, you will see why later! You can then click "Create Company", integrate with whatever software is being used by the company and start uploading documents:
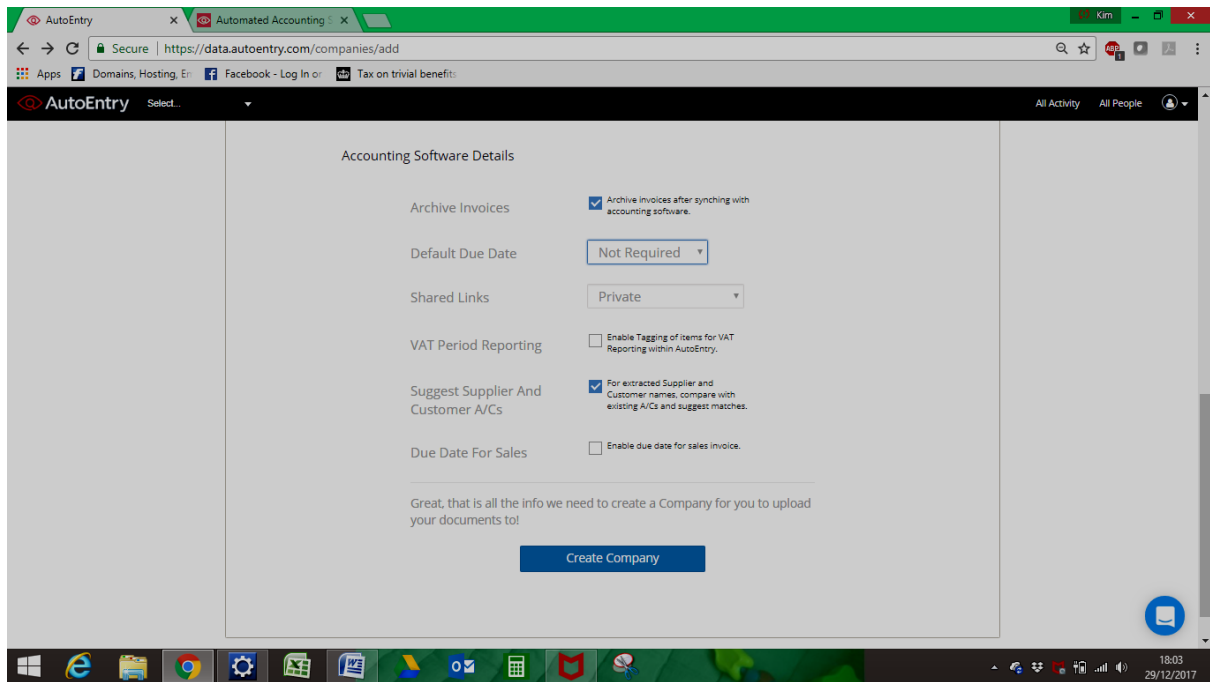
To access all of the main functionality click on the company name from the dashboard list or from the "Select" drop down menu and it will open the following screen:
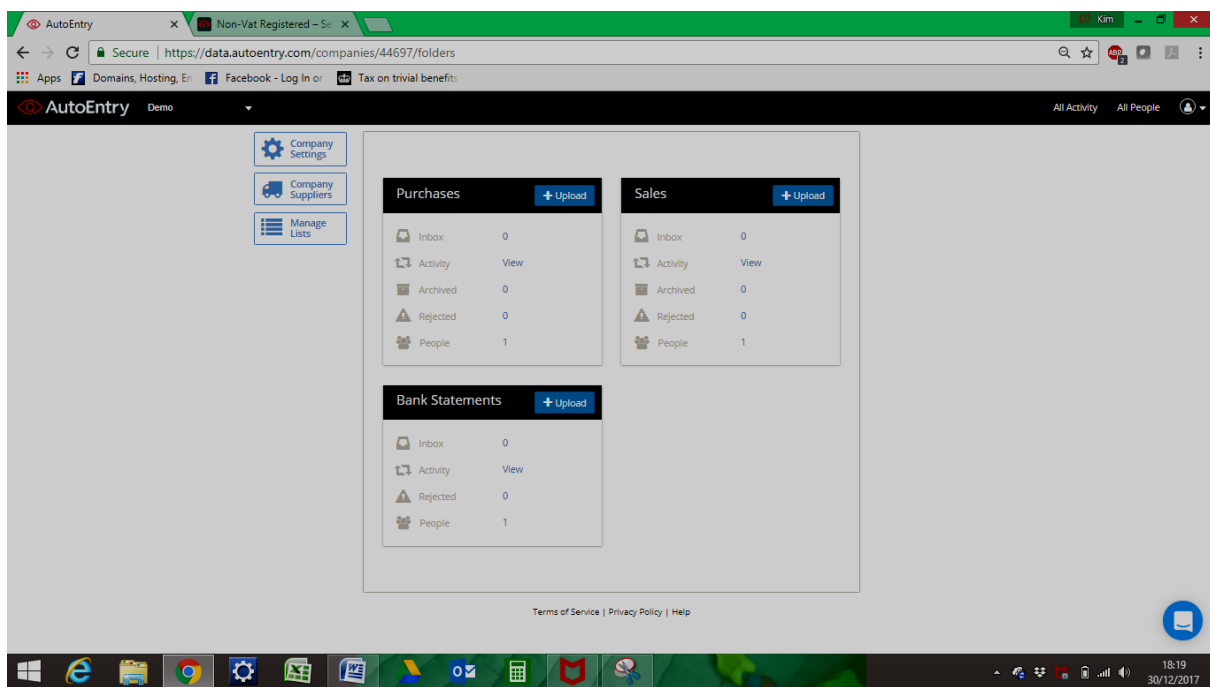
You can access "Company Settings" again on the left, "Company Suppliers" and "Manage Lists".

Clicking on "Company Settings" will take you to a screen with 3 tabs, the first contains all of the company details already entered (and also the box to select non VAT registered) and you can change anything you need to. The second tab is the "Integration" tab; you simply choose the relevant software from the list and follow the on-screen instructions, really very easy. The last tab "Integration Payment Account" lets you choose the bank account(s) within the accounting software

that you would like to make payment from/to should you choose to mark invoices as paid as you publish them if the software you use allows this functionality. This is another way to speed up data entry.

Clicking on "Company Suppliers" will show you a list of suppliers from your accounting software (not sure why a list of customers is not shown as well) and from here you can set nominal code defaults (or category as Autoentry calls it), VAT code default, whether or not to auto publish for that supplier, due date, payment method and bank account (you can also chose whether to publish as a supplier invoice or as a bank payment, other payment or whatever your particular accounting software calls it) which is really very useful and whether to automatically mark as paid.

Clicking on "Manage Lists" allows you to see a list of categories and VAT codes that are in use within the integrated accounting software, if you are linked to accounting software none of this can be changed, it is simply for reference but if you are not integrating with software and will be exporting out via CSV then you can import lists or add and amend as you wish.

There are three other boxes, "Sales", "Purchases" and "Bank Statements" and this is where you go to upload documents. Click on the blue "+Upload" button on any of the 3 boxes and you will be taken to a box that advises you to either email the document to the stated email address (sales and purchases only) or upload via browsing or dragging and dropping:
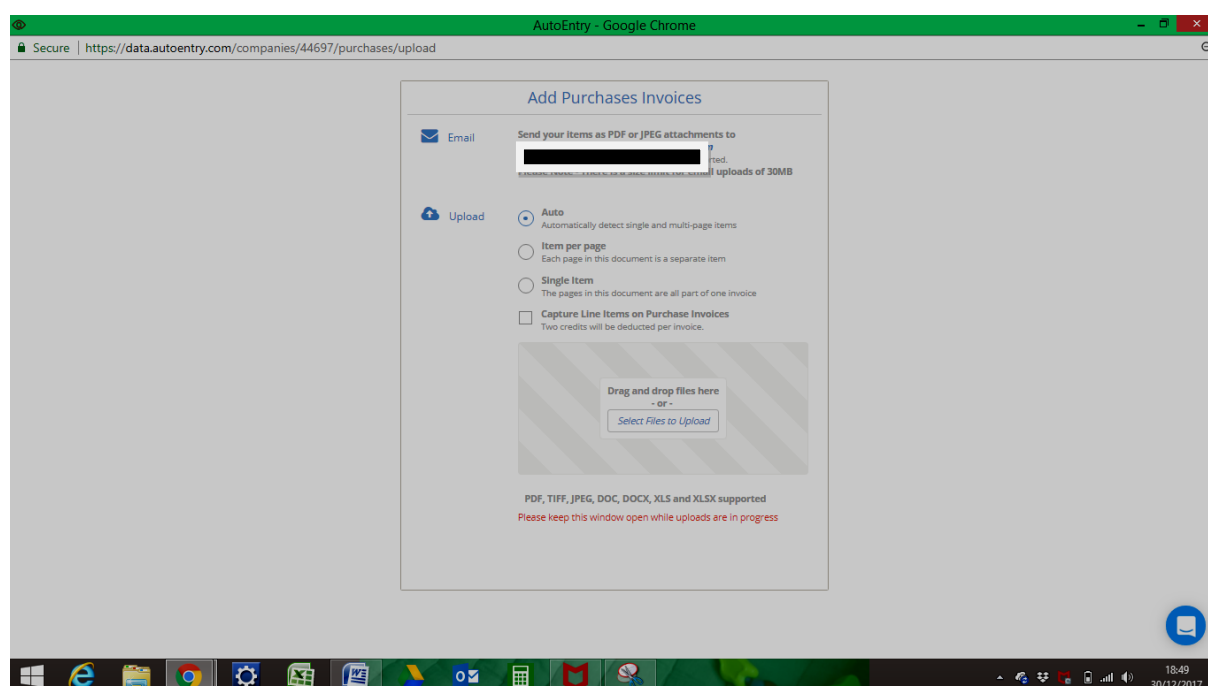
You need to choose via a series of radio buttons whether to let Autoentry auto detect if the documents are single or multi page, or if you want to stipulate that each page is a separate item or if all pages in the document are part of one invoice. You can also check a box to tell Autoentry to capture all line items on an invoice but beware this costs 2 credits rather than 1. If you need the analysis this could increase the cost significantly. You can then browse to the file you have scanned in or drag and drop it. A blue progress bar appears at the bottom and once uploaded it will say "Done" at the bottom of the screen. It's not easy to see though; this could do with being bigger and

maybe in its own splash box for you to click off so it's more obvious. I didn't see it the first time I did it and therefore thought it had not worked and ended up uploading a 300 document file twice:
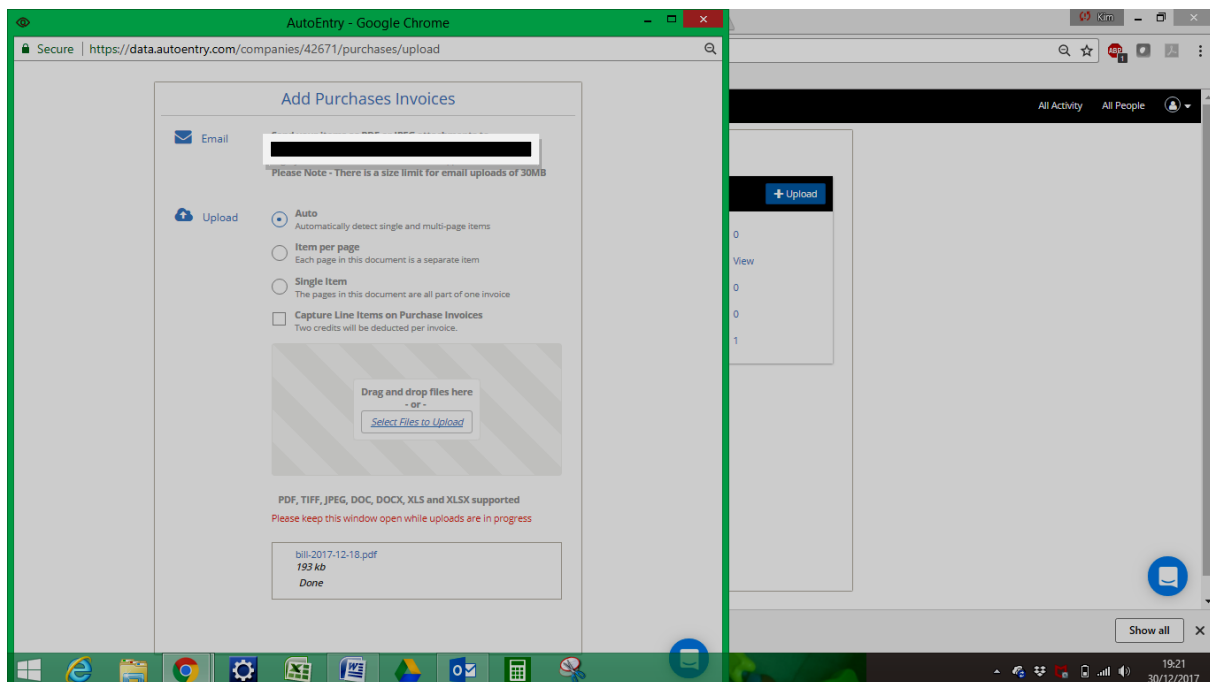
Thankfully a quick chat with Autoentry in the chat box (which is accessed by clicking the little blue icon with a white speech bubble that is always present in the bottom right corner) sorted that out so I didn't use 600 credits instead of 300! They deleted one file for me. Chat function is good as all of your old conversations stay there and are accessed simply by clicking on the blue icon which is a great little feature. It isn't always an immediate answer though so be aware of that, there can be quite a delay but even if you shut it down you will be emailed the answer and the whole transcript.

The other way to upload purchases is to take a picture with your phone or tablet via the mobile app (note that sales invoices and bank and credit card statements cannot be uploaded via the app, this must be done through the main account on a computer). I have an iPhone and it's very easy to download and install the app via the App Store and I expect it would similarly be as easy on other operating systems but I have not tried any others. Once downloaded on iPhone you simply login, choose the relevant company from the drop down list and click the blue cross at the bottom of the screen to take a picture, choose the right bank account and then hit the blue upload button. Please note though this is far as you can go with the app, you need to be within your main account on a computer to code and publish through to your accounting software, you can view the documents via the app but no changes at all can be made, it is simply for taking photos and uploading them for processing.

You can also email documents straight to the Autoentry email inbox (one for sales and one for purchases created in the "Mailbox Details" step at the top of page 4). In my example the email addresses are demo-purchases@mail.autoentry.com or demo-sales@mail.autoentry.com, the "demo-purchases" or demo-sales" would simply be replaced with whatever you chose at that stage. As far as I am aware you can't email statements, they have to be uploaded. For example, if your

mobile phone provider emails your monthly invoice to you, you can simply forward it on to Autoentry using the purchases email address and if its set to auto publish, that is all you have to do, if not you need to code and publish as normal once processed.

Whichever way you upload you then need to wait for Autoentry to do its magic behind the scenes. Whilst this is happening, on both the Autoentry website and the app the file will be shown as queued for processing (on the browser choose the company, and click on activity in the relevant type of file box and click on activity to see the status of all files):

Browser view
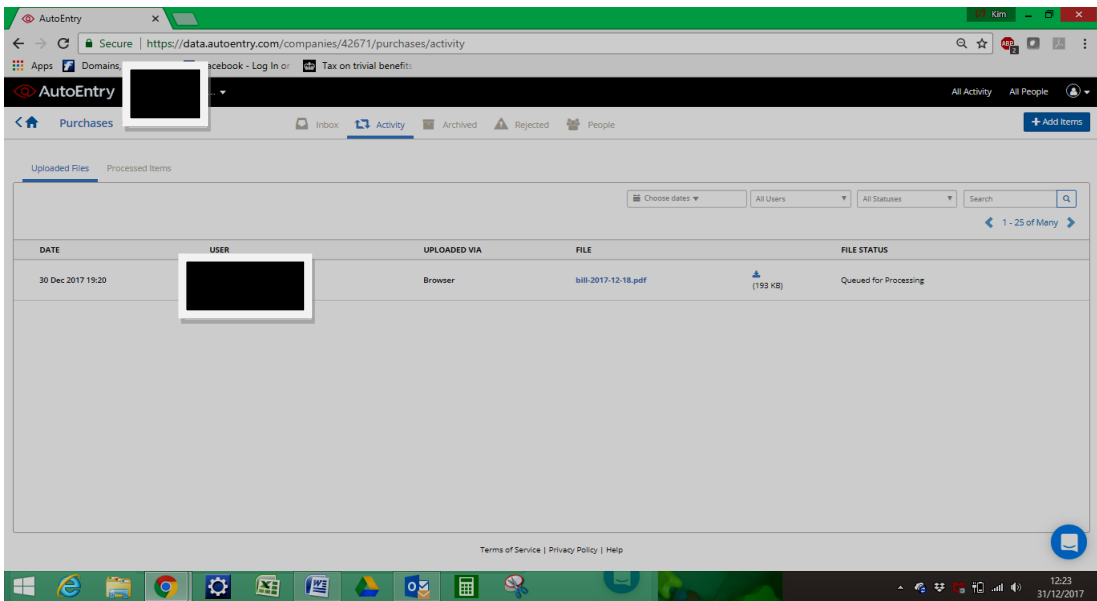
iPhone view
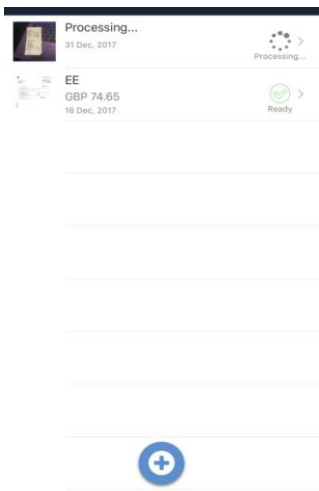
Processing is advertised as taking 2-5 hours on average, guaranteed within 24 hours. Once the files are ready you will receive an email notification if you have entered this information within company details. Select the company from the drop down list on the top bar to see the screen shown earlier on page 5 that has 3 tiles for sales, purchases and bank statements. For each type there will be a

number displayed within the relevant inbox depending on the amount of files waiting to be published, it will show you how many files have been rejected, how many have been archived and how many people are attached to the company. Clicking on the inbox will open a screen as follows:
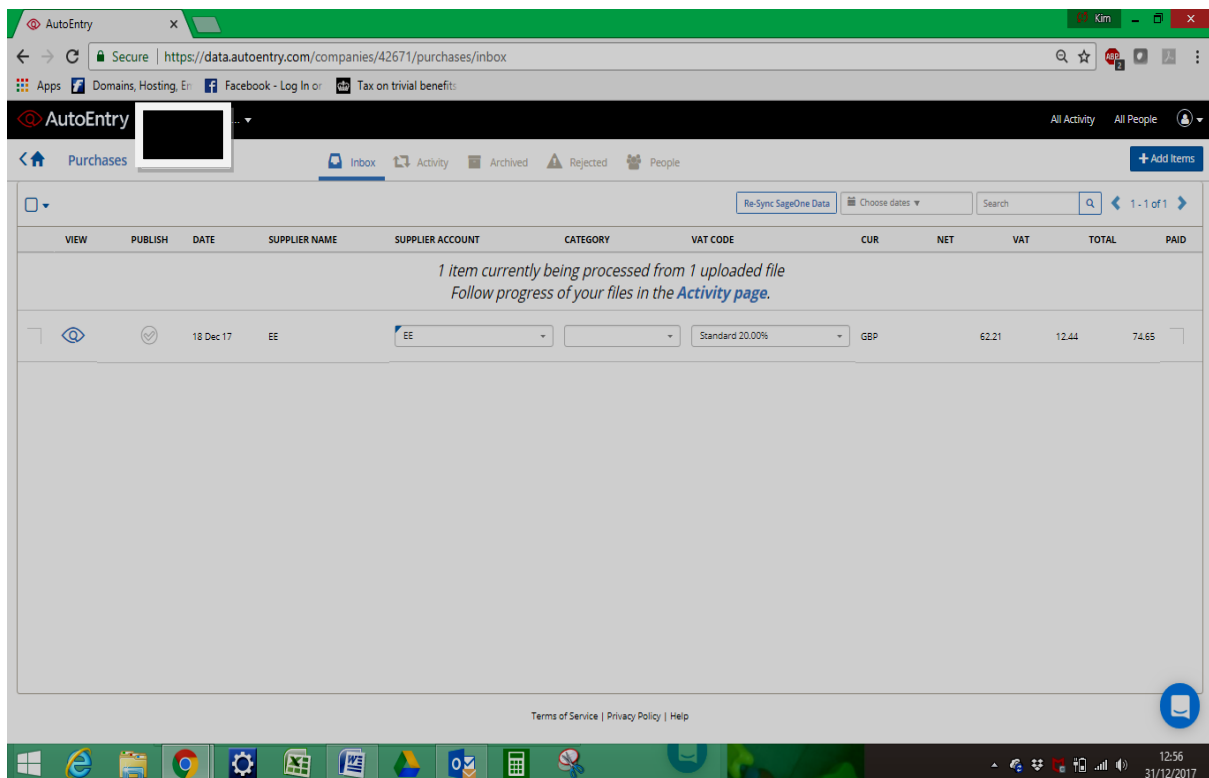
If the supplier/customer account is already within your software it will suggest this as a match if you clicked this option on the "Accounting Software Details" section discussed at the bottom of page 4 You can change it to another account if you need to or click on "Add Contact" from the second drop down box Called Supplier A/C or Customer A/C if the supplier or customer does not already exist. This will autofill based on the name that has been extracted.

 I had to upload 300+ sales invoices and the customer names had not been entered into the accounting software so this was a quick way of entering the customer names without manual keying which would have taken so much longer. However, only names will be extracted not addresses which I did find a bit annoying as these will have to be manually entered in to the accounting software later on. It would be good to see this option written into a future release. You need to choose the category (or nominal code) and VAT code but Autoentry will display the net, VAT and gross totals that have been extracted. You can click the box to pay the invoice at the same time as publishing if you wish. You can click on the blue eye to view the original document (which will be attached to the transaction within your accounting software for you to view at any time, which is fantastic, with this system, going paperless is incredibly easy). If you would like to view the document or add line items click on the blue eye in the "View" column and a screen will open which will allow you to change information and add more detail such as reference numbers:

Once you have completed the relevant information, the tick in the "Publish" column will turn green and you click this to publish through to your software or if you are on the screen shown above click on the green Publish button. And that's it all done! As you use Autoentry more and more, it learns and prefills as much of the information as it can thereby reducing time spent even more and once you are confident you can set as many documents as you can to auto publish meaning you don't have to interact with the software at all for those files.

Key Benefits

- Very easy to navigate around, intuitive screens
- Time saving, frees up time spent manually inputting which can be redeployed to other more high value tasks
- "Learns" via repetition
- Can log in from anywhere as its Cloud based
- Unlimited amount of companies and users for no extra cost
- Credits can be rolled over for 3 months

Strengths

- Will check for duplicate invoices or receipts and alert you before publishing which avoids duplication
- Very easy seamless integration with software
- Chat function and very helpful support team
- Copy of the source document is attached to the transaction within the accounting software
- Very few rejections, the only ones I experienced where duplicates so accuracy is very good

Weaknesses

- Does not extract customer and supplier addresses
- Help is a bit buried right at the bottom of the screen and is small, it would be useful to have it easily accessible on the toolbar at the top
- App is a bit limited, it can only deal with purchases and coding and publishing cannot be done from the app

Value for Money

As at time of review the current prices are as follows and are exactly the same for the Accountants & Bookkeepers and Small & Medium Businesses packages:

- Bronze 50 credits £9
- Silver 100 credits £17
- Gold 200 credits £32
- Platinum 500 credits £75

Any credits that are not used are rolled over to the next three months, you can have as many companies and users as you like for no extra cost as well. The bonus of this is if you have several small companies that would only need a few credits a month then, for example, the gold level package with 200 credits could be split across those clients, you don't have to have a separate subscription for each client which I really like. You can take a free trial for 30 days with no credit card needed.

My main reticence with this type of product was that I felt that by the time I have scanned in a document, taken a photo of a receipt or forwarded an email to the Autoentry specific email address and then checked it is coded correctly and published to the relevant software, I could have entered several invoices or receipts quicker manually. This does, however, ignore the artificial intelligence side of the software which will learn as you use it more which makes the process quicker, publishing is a touch of a button and you can set auto publish up for documents you know don't change month to month. If using professionally as an accountant or a bookkeeper then clients can be trained on the software to email or photograph their own documents thereby saving the accountant or bookkeeper even more time so even I have to concede the advantages outweigh the disadvantages.

I have to admit though that I am totally won over by the software, it does speed input up greatly, I really like that the original source document is attached to the transaction within the accounting software and being able to push straight through from my email or from my phone means emails and bits of paper and cleared and dealt with much more frequency and I feel a lot less cluttered as a result.

So, value for money? Absolutely, without a doubt.

Testimonials

There are many testimonials on the Autoentry website here https://www.autoentry.com/why-autoentry. Most are full 5 star reviews with many testimonials claiming it has transformed their working lives, decreased time spent on data entry, streamlined processes and is a big help for those businesses that either can't have or don't want automatic bank feeds within their software as the bank statement capture is so useful.

Summary of Review

Autoentry is a fabulous piece of software that I will keep using without a doubt. Once you realise how much time it saves, the cost is easier to take on board. It is a very easy intuitive system to use and you will not waste hours trying to find your way around it. The unlimited number of companies and users is a huge bonus. The help function and customer service have been exemplary if a little slow on the chat function. I think there are a couple of things that could be written in to further releases to streamline the process even more, such as being able to extract addresses and developing the app a bit more but overall, it's awesome.

Following this review AutoEntry has incorporated the following updates as per ICB's recommendations:

- The 'help' button is being moved to the top toolbar to make it easier to access, as suggested

- There will be a clearer 'progress' icon for uploading documents, as suggested

Disclaimer

The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers having reviewed Autoentry by Ocrex software, The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers cannot be held responsible in any way for the actions of the company Ocrex or their software Autoentry. This review is merely an unbiased overview of the software package. Any enquiries should be directed to **sales@autoentry.com** or **support@autoentry.com**.