Optimising the ClientConnect Bookings Explorer for Speed

Introduction

ClientConnect is optimised for speed and efficiency for what we consider typical usage scenarios. However, every business is difference. Some businesses operate with a much higher number of daily bookings, resources or clients than others, and therefore their usage scenarios may fall outside that which ClientConnect is optimised for.

This guide presents a number of settings and tweaks that can be used to help make ClientConnect operate more efficiently under certain conditions. These conditions depend on a number of factors such as the type and speed of your computer, how many clients and bookings you have, whether you are on a network or not, etc.

Therefore, the application of these settings should be done under the guidance of Technical Support, as it is possible that applying certain settings may have the opposite effect and actually *reduce* the performance of your computer under certain specific circumstances.

## Optimising the Bookings Explorer

Reduce or Hide the Date Navigator Months Displayed

The Date Navigator is used by ClientConnect for a number of purposes, such as providing you with a quick and easy way of navigating to different dates in the Bookings Explorer. One of the features it provides is to visually indicate whether a particular date has any bookings by bolding the date itself if there are bookings on that day. Calculating this can take a little longer if you typically have a large number of bookings.
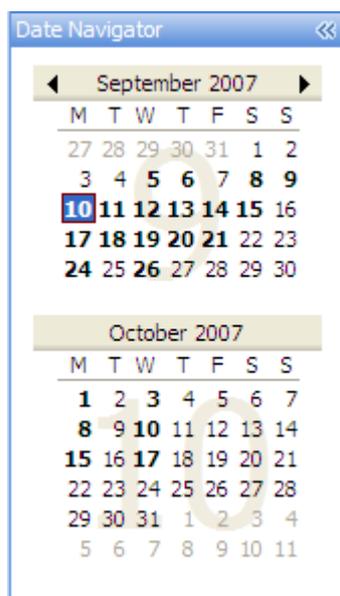
Therefore, you can reduce the workload of ClientConnect by reducing the number of months displayed.

You do this by changing the **Date Navigator Rows** setting in the **Options** screen, as shown below:
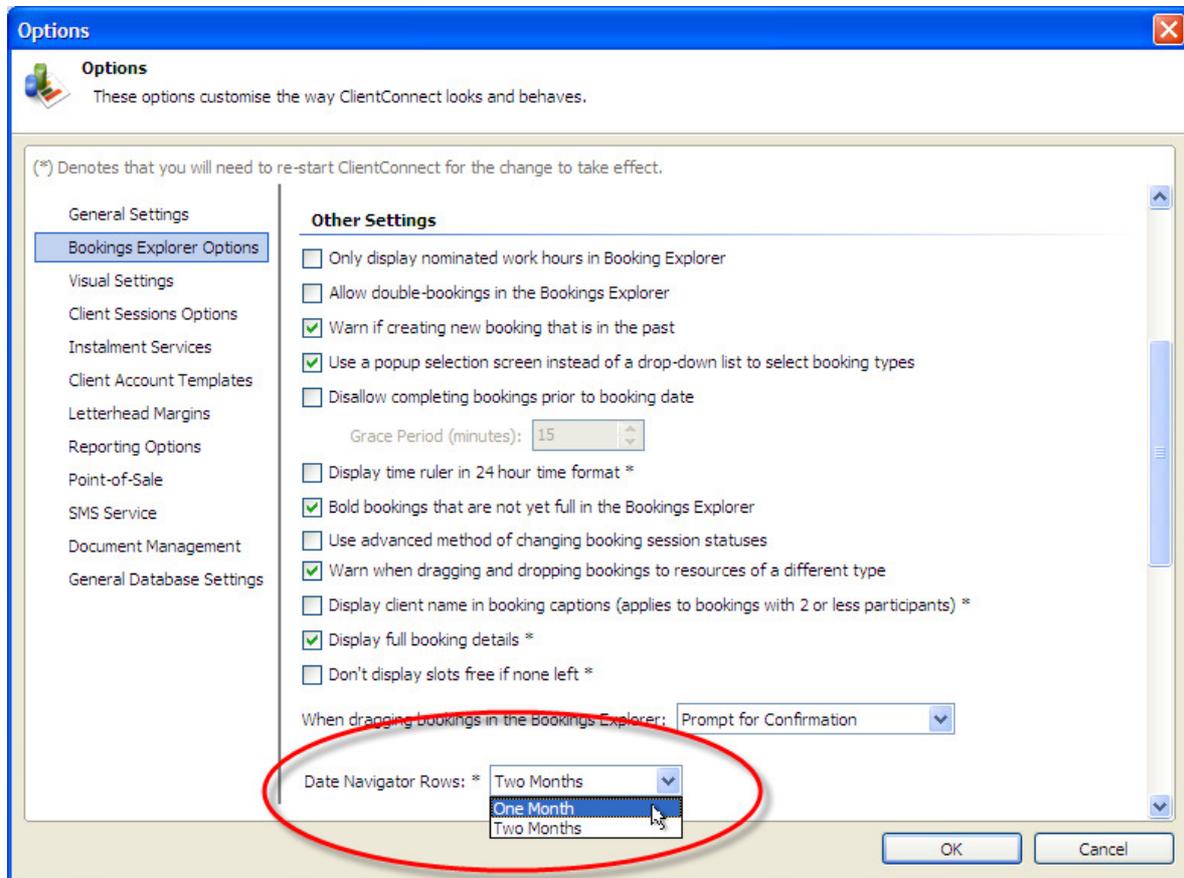
Another advantage of doing this is that it allows you to see more Resources in the **Visible Resources** list.

Hide the Booking Details Pane

The Booking Details Pane is designed to give you an overview summary of the booking you have currently selected in the Bookings Explorer. These details include participants, free slots, etc. However, on screens with a large number of bookings, this pane can potentially slow down ClientConnect slightly as ClientConnect attempts to dynamically gather the details it needs to display.

The main advantage to having the Booking Details Pane turned on is that your view of other bookings aren't obscured by the *hint window* that pops up when you click a booking if the Booking Details Pane is turned off.

To turn off the Booking Details Pane, simply click the **Details Pane** button on the Ribbon toolbar.

Limit the Number of Old Bookings Displayed

If you typically generate a large number of bookings each day, over time this results in a lot of data that ClientConnect has to process every time you go into the Bookings Explorer, even if not all of those bookings are displayed on screen (such as old bookings from past weeks). The reasons for this are many, including the need for ClientConnect to keep track of bookings that belong to a series.

However, you can reduce the amount of data ClientConnect has to work with at any one time by setting a limit on the number of days in the past that ClientConnect needs to load up when you go into the Bookings Explorer.

In the **Options** screen, ensure the "**Use dynamic booking data retrieval**" field is un-ticked, and then enter the number of days back from today that you wish ClientConnect to load in the "**Limit of bookings to:**" field. A value of zero (0) tells ClientConnect to not place a limit and simply load all bookings. This is fine if you do not have many bookings, or your computer is quite new and powerful.
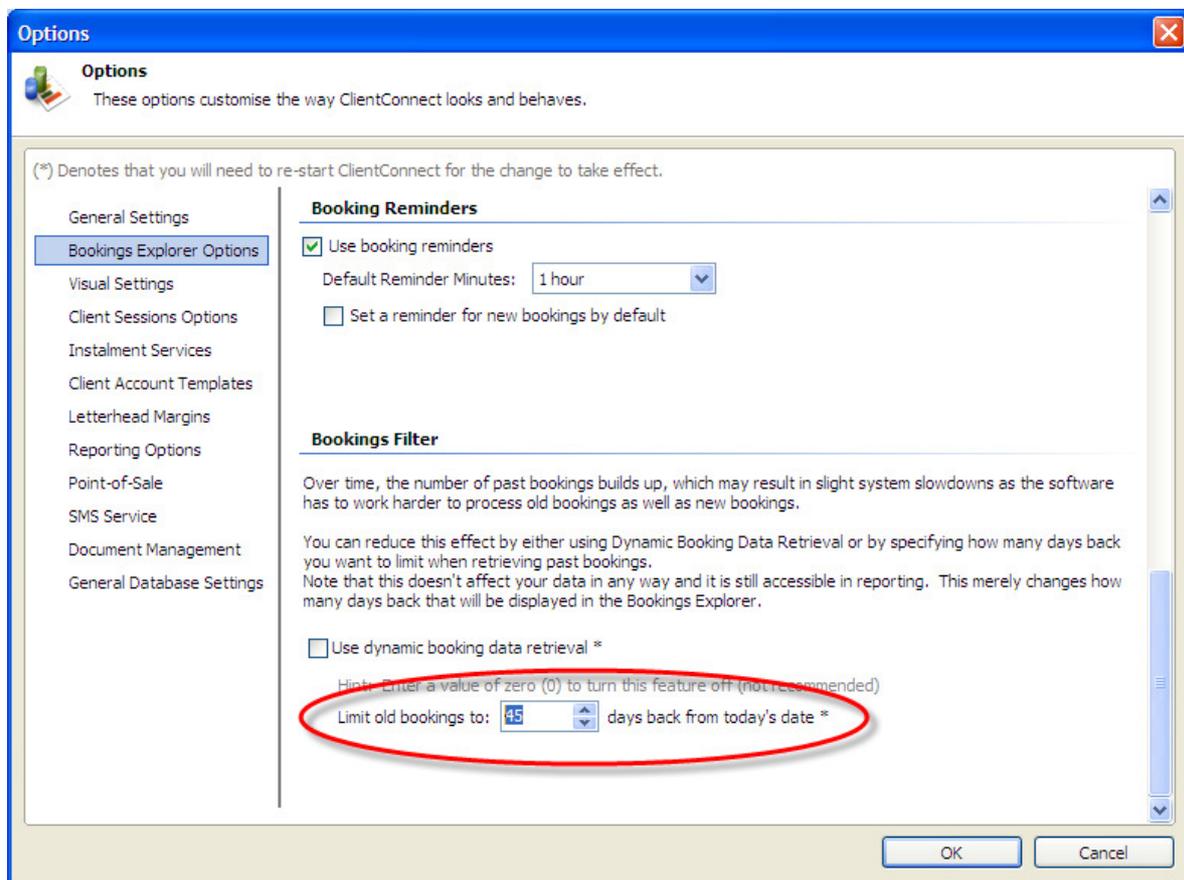
However, if you have a large number of bookings per day (say, more than 20), or your computer hardware is not the fastest, then setting the number of days to something like 30-45 will dramatically reduce the amount of data ClientConnect needs to load.

Note that the disadvantage of doing this is that if you attempt to navigate back to a date older than the number of days you set in this field, your Bookings Explorer won't display any bookings for those older dates. If you rarely have the need to navigate back too far, then this isn't a problem. If you

find yourself regularly going back say a month, then make sure you set the number of days to something larger, such as two months (60 days).

Turn on Dynamic Booking Data Retrieval

Dynamic Booking Data Retrieval is a feature of ClientConnect whereby ClientConnect intelligently calculates what booking data it needs to display and retrieves only that data.

For example, you may have thousands of bookings in your system spanning several months, which under normal circumstances means ClientConnect has to do a lot of work to load all of them. However, if you are only viewing today's bookings, then Dynamic Booking Data Retrieval will calculate what booking records it needs to display then dynamically retrieve those and only those records. This means that even if you do have thousands of booking records in the system, ClientConnect may only need to retrieve a few dozen at a time (there are a lot of little factors that surround this which ClientConnect manages for you. For example, ClientConnect will work out if it needs to retrieve a more bookings that aren't necessarily being displayed on screen but may be a part of a series of bookings).

To turn on Dynamic Booking Data Retrieval, simply tick the "**Use dynamic booking data retrieval**" field in the **Options** screen:
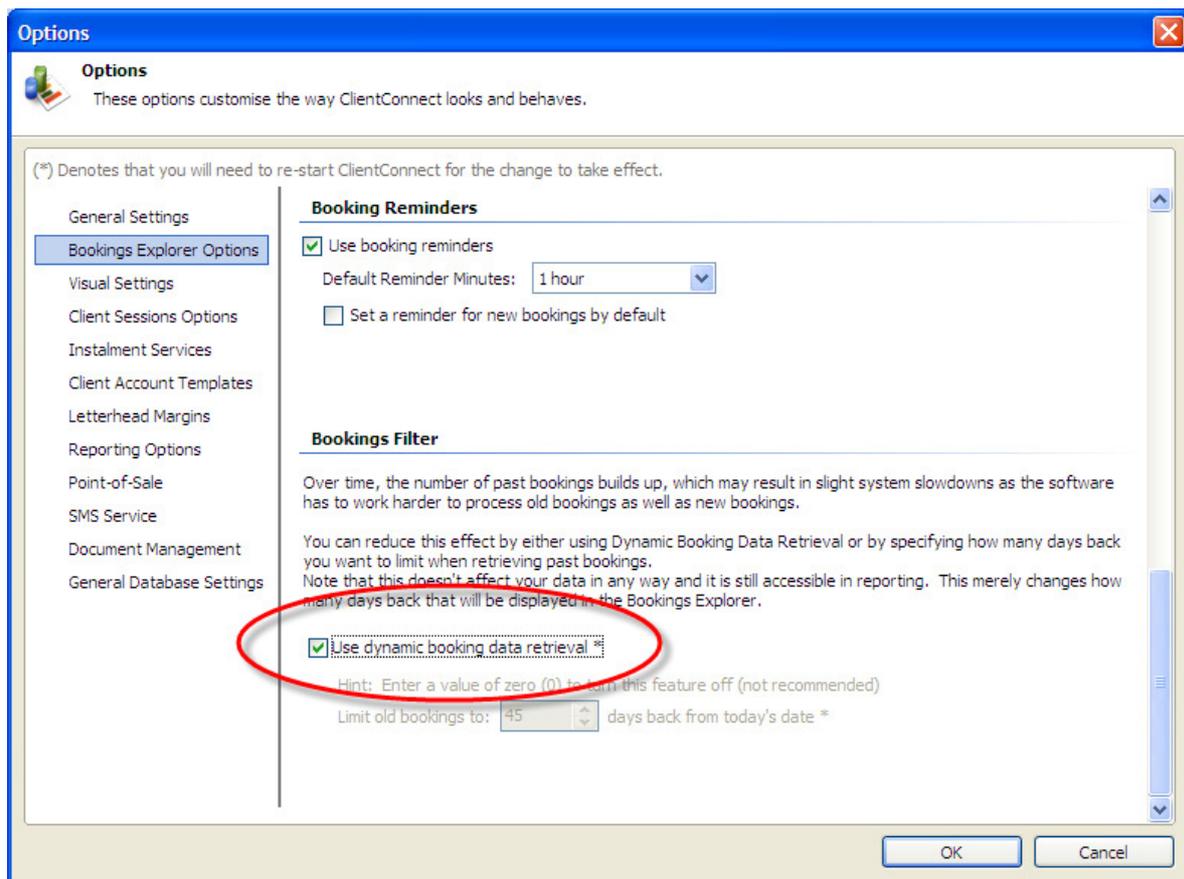
Note that by turning this feature on, the "**Limit old bookings to:**" field becomes disabled as it is no longer applicable.

When *not* to use Dynamic Booking Data Retrieval

This feature can potentially dramatically speed up ClientConnect if you have a very large number of bookings and Resources in the system (such as if you average 6-8 bookings per resource per day and you have around 6 or more Resources in the system. These thresholds vary however depending on how fast your computer hardware is and how much RAM- memory- it has installed). However, if you don't have many bookings or Resources, or your computer hardware is a little on the 'old' side and not particularly fast, then this feature can potentially *slow down* ClientConnect.

This is because each time you navigate to different dates or Resources in the Bookings Explorer, ClientConnect needs to calculate what records it needs to retrieve, then go and retrieve them. This obviously takes a little time. Therefore, if you don't have that many bookings in your system (or your computer hardware is slow), then the time it takes to perform this calculation may actually take longer than the time it takes ClientConnect to simply load all data at once.

Turn off Visual Effects in the Bookings Explorer

ClientConnect is a very modern software application, and as such it tries to present to the user fresh, modern and aesthetically pleasing user interface and screens. However, like all modern software, this takes more computing power than software that merely presents the old 'battleship grey' screens. Therefore, if your computer hardware is old or slow, or maybe lacking sufficient memory (RAM), then ClientConnect may appear to operate slower than desired.

You can mitigate this problem by turning off the visual effects in the Bookings Explorer. This is done in the **Options** screen by un-ticking the field "**Display visual effects in Bookings Explorer**".

There are no serious disadvantages to doing this, except your Bookings Explorer may look a little more 'bland'. The advantage is that ClientConnect doesn't have to work as hard or use as much memory to display bookings onscreen.

Additionally, you can turn off two other settings on the same **Options** screen which may result in a little more performance on a slow computer: you can un-tick the fields "**Bold bookings that are not yet full in the Bookings Explorer**" and "**Display full booking details**". This will result in slightly less summary information being displayed in the hint window (when **Booking Details Pane** is turned *off*), but again ClientConnect won't have to work as hard to display your bookings.

Other Settings that May Impact Performance

The following suggestions aren't specific to the Bookings Explorer but can help improve the overall responsiveness of ClientConnect, particularly on slower computer hardware.

Turn off Animation Effects

The animation effects- despite providing a degree of *visual distraction* to the user whilst ClientConnect is busy retrieving data for a screen- can make the software perform a little slower when navigating between screens. This is particularly relevant to those running older and slower computer hardware. You can turn off the animation effects in the **Options** screen, under **Visual Settings**->**Animation Effect**, as shown below:
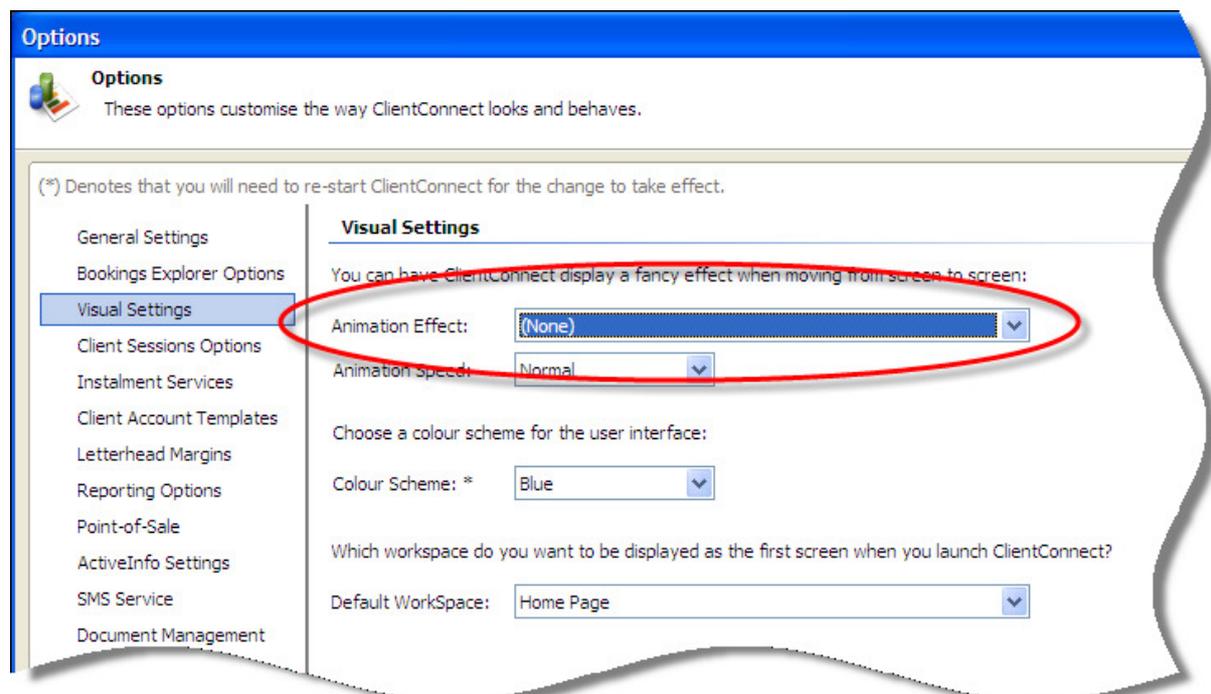
Turn off the Status Bar Statistics

The Status Bar Statistics that appears on the status bar at the bottom of the ClientConnect main screen provide you with a quick visual summary of some basic details about your business. Hovering your mouse over the statistics pops up a Hint window with even more summary information.

However, this convenience comes at a slight performance cost as ClientConnect needs to re-calculate these statistics every time some data is changed.

You can prevent this from happening by hiding the Status bar Statistics. You do this by **right-clicking** anywhere on the status bar and *un-ticking* the option '**Show Statistics**'.
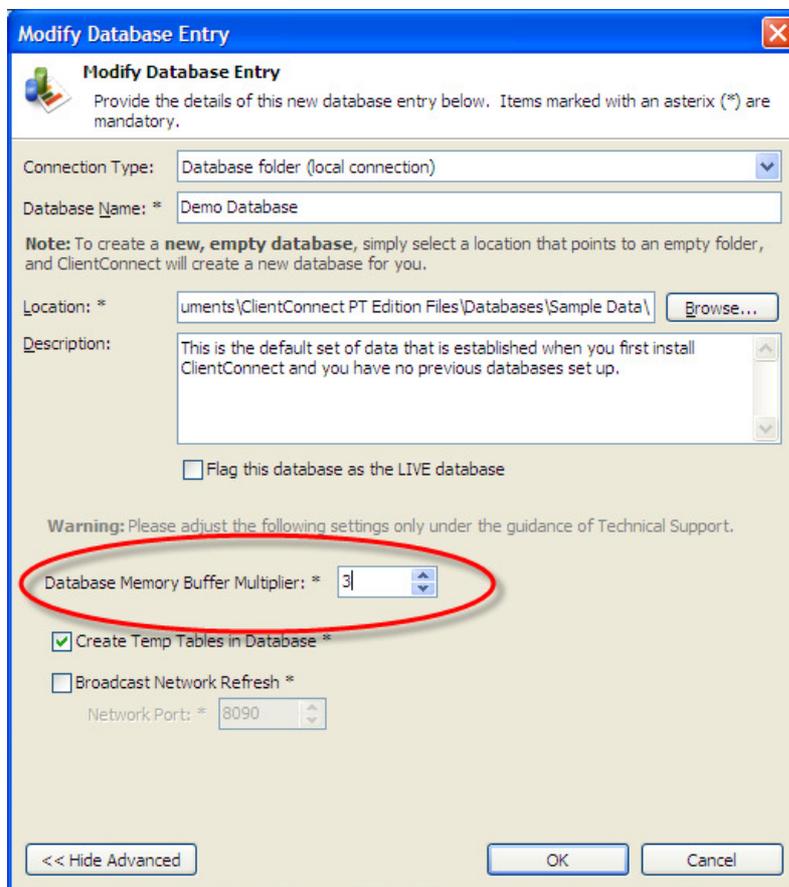
Increase the Database Memory Buffer Multiplier for Networks

When operating on a network, workstations running ClientConnect that access data on another computer need to make many round-trips of database access throughout the usual course of usage. On slow networks (such as 802.11b wireless networks, or 10Mb/s Ethernet networks), this can impact the performance of ClientConnect.

You can increase the amount of data ClientConnect buffers on each retrieval over a network, which can help reduce the number of times ClientConnect needs to connect to the server.

This is a per-database setting, so in the **ClientConnect Database Management** screen, modify the required database entry. Click the **Show Advanced >>** button to display advanced database options.

Increase the value of the field "**Database Memory Buffer Multiplier**" to something other than the default of 1. You can increase this setting to a maximum of 6.

How much you increase this value is a matter of experimentation. The higher the setting, the more memory ClientConnect requires. Therefore, if your computer is an older machine, or is lacking sufficient RAM (e.g., less than 1Gb for Windows Vista), then setting this too high can actually reduce ClientConnect's performance slightly.

A good average is a setting of 3. If you have a particularly modern computer with lots of memory (such as 2Gb or more), then you can safely enter a value of 5 or 6.

Note that this setting only has real impact when running on a network.