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*From the April/May 2007 [Review of Construction Accounting Software](#)*

Builder Information System (BIS) from Management Information Control Systems, Inc. (MICS) is a financial management program designed specifically for the construction industry, including General and Specialty Contractors such as Commercial, Home Builders, Electrical and Mechanical Contractors. With 18 modules, BIS is available in three editions. The Standard Edition is targeted to small companies with up to three concurrent users that require full accounting functionality along with full-featured Job Cost and Job Billing. The Professional Edition offers a choice of modules that also include Job Scheduling, Document Management, Inventory, Purchase Order, and Document Link and Imaging, with support for up to 100 concurrent users. The Enterprise Edition offers the same modules but can accommodate up to 1,000 concurrent users, allows for secure remote access, additional security features, and more.

The Job Cost module offers user-defined capabilities in a variety of areas, including unit cost type, subcontracting, direct cost and equipment. Users can set up and monitor budgeted expenses for every cost code in the system or for just the ones they wish. Job numbers and cost codes are user-definable and can contain up to 10 alphanumeric characters. The Job Billing module allows for billing in a lump sum, cost-plus or percentage capability. Up to 99,999 change orders are allowed per contract, and progress billings are done according to AIA formats.

The Job Scheduling module allows IDs to be assigned to each task or service, as well as to be populated from the Budget and/or Schedule of Values. It also allows for descriptions to be entered, percentage complete tracking, and start and finish dates. Employing the Critical Path Method, daily, weekly or annual calendars can be

utilized and budgeted and billed amounts can be tracked from within Job Scheduling

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various system tools and other database functions. New companies are easily setup, and the Help section provides new users with detailed information. BIS is easily navigated, even for beginners, with data-entry screens containing lookup options in all necessary fields.

### **MODULES & ADD-ONS – 5 Stars**

The Standard version of BIS includes GL, AP, AR, Job Cost, Job Billing, and Payroll modules. Add-ons include Union, Bank Reconciliation, Subcontract Control and Password. The Professional and Enterprise Editions include the GL module, and the Enterprise Edition also includes the Report Server module. Other modules are purchased individually as needed, including AP, AR, Job Cost, Job Billing, Payroll, Union, Bank Reconciliation, Subcontract Control, Password, as well as Report Server (included in Enterprise), Job Scheduling, Document Link and Imaging, Document Manager, Equipment Control, Inventory, Purchase Order and Report Writer.

Several new features were added to the latest version of the program, including My Desktop, which contains quick links to all of the installed modules. Clicking on a link will display the functions that are available within that respective module. My Favorites allows users to create a listing of frequently visited functions for quicker access. The Job Dashboard provides access to job overviews for a single job, some jobs, or for all jobs in the system. The addition of the optional Job Scheduling module makes BIS even more attractive to the construction industry needing the Critical Path method of scheduling. The BIS exclusive Subcontract View enables General Contractors to quickly evaluate the work load on their subcontractors. Also new is the Interactive Data Analysis feature that allows users to easily view data by using a spreadsheet style form that employs a Pivot Table.

### **PRODUCTIVITY TOOLS – 5 Stars**

The Report Server is an excellent productivity tool offered by BIS. It will

automatically generate and print, export, and/or e-mail reports to recipients. Users

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BIS is designed for construction firms of all sizes, so it's easy for smaller firms to purchase the Standard Edition and upgrade at a later date. ODBC compliance ensures easy import and export functionality between BIS and Microsoft Office. Users can also link data between BIS and Microsoft Access and run a mail merge in Word. As well, the Document Link module allows users to link designs, spreadsheets, photos, etc. with relevant contract files.

### **REPORTING – 5 Stars**

Reporting options are numerous thanks to an extensive set of default reports, and the inclusion of the BIS Report Writer module allows users to easily create customized reports. When used in conjunction with the exclusive DrillDown+ data hyperlink, users can drilldown to originating financial information in seconds. And the Report Server, mentioned earlier, makes it easier than ever to schedule, run and distribute reports automatically inside the office and out. BIS also offers custom report writing services.

### **SUPPORT & TRAINING – 4.5 Stars**

BIS offers four-, six-, or eight-hour technical support plans starting at \$499. The company also offers three levels of total support: Bronze (seven hours), Silver (11 hours) and Gold (15 hours). The total support packages include both technical support and training. A training schedule can be found on the vendor's website, and training can be done onsite, online or via telephone. Introduced with the current version, the installation CD now contains a complete set of reference manuals with over 1,500 pages of detail.

### **RELATIVE VALUE – 5 Stars**

BIS is an excellent program that has just seen a major upgrade. The addition of the Job Scheduling module, the addition of the Desktop menu, and numerous other enhancements have made this program even more attractive to midsize construction

businesses. The program starts at \$4,060 for the Standard edition, and pricing varies

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