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target="_blank">www.cs.thomson.com

*From the [Dec. 2007 Feature](#) on
Website Builders for Accountants*

Formerly branded under the Creative Solutions name, Web Builder CS is a website development system for accounting and tax firms that provides a robust collection of content, user tools, firm management options and client collaboration functions. As a part of the CS Professional Suite, the system also offers some integration capabilities, allowing for secure document storage and transfer. Web Builder CS websites are hosted on Thomson's secure servers, and firms using the system can register and retain ownership of their own website address. Websites also come with free firm e-mail addresses.

The

Web Builder CS management console simplifies the process of initial website setup, providing the user with dozens of template designs and customization features, including the ability to use Flash or other action graphics on practice websites. The company also offers design services to assist in creating these images. Websites have good personalization options, with pre-written text areas for common page types (like About Us, Firm Services, Planning Tools, etc.) that can be edited with a very easy-to-use text formatting tool that resembles the formatting functions in Microsoft Word. Any number of 'completely from scratch' pages can also be created. Traditional images and logos can be added to page content areas, but the system uses stock photos for page template areas instead of allowing the use of a practice's logo. The initial setup process is guided and fairly simple and results in attractive websites with generous client-focused content. Search engine submission services are available,

and Thomson includes free online and phone-based support for users. Custom

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and life insurance.

Most notable is the tax and accounting-focused content like the thrice-monthly PPC Tax & Business Alerts newsletters and a library of tools and content from ForeField Knowledge Trust that includes more than 350 articles, FAQs and interactive functions. All of this content, including the newsletters, is branded with the practice's name and other information. Another cool feature of Web Builder CS is the built-in Surveys function that allows the creation of online client/visitor questionnaires using the Quick Polls function. An automated visitor feedback form is also included, while a customized practice events calendar is available and can be used to provide website visitors and clients with tax due dates, firm holidays or other calendar items. More PPC content can also be added to firm websites for an additional fee.

Sites built with Web Builder CS also offer clients secure login access to online tools and integration functions for firms also using other CS Professional Suite programs. This includes document sharing options, like access to UltraTax 1040 Portals for sharing tax returns and other client documents, as well as online tax organizers. Clients can also login to TTA's Client Bookkeeping Solution, an online accounting program for small businesses, through a firm's website. The system integrates fully with Thomson's tax, write-up and other financial applications. For professional staff, the website can act as the starting point to access all of their programs through TTA's Virtual Office CS.

Web Builder CS has an initial setup cost of \$250; monthly subscription costs are \$60. It is simple to use and customize, and provides excellent financial calculators, planning information, tax content and newsletter options. It can be used independently of the CS Professional Suite, but the integration capabilities

that are available make it especially valuable to those practices using those

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