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Anna M. Sneets • Jan. 01, 2009

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For nonprofit organizations, change is a way of life. As creative as they are diverse, the ever-changing landscape of granting opportunities, funding requirements and reporting requests keep them agile. Discovering new ways to recruit donor and volunteer support even in economic volatility — while accomplishing their mission — happens time and again. Often, their choice of accounting software limits their efficiency to what they can re-produce manually to meet their divergent needs.

When considering accounting software for a nonprofit organization, management needs must be considered. The management capabilities, while they cannot be ignored, are as different for every group as their constituency and mission. This review focuses purely on the accounting aspects of these software titles. If management functions are not within the accounting software package, decisions will ensue regarding possibilities of integration or, at the very least, import/export capabilities to eliminate duplication of efforts. In many instances, particularly in smaller organizations, accounting or management functions are performed by volunteers, leading to emphasis in considering security, scalability, interface and training options.

If you were trying to compare apples to pineapples, you may think they might sound similar, but by simply looking at them, you realize they are not. In fact, they are only alike in the fact that they are fruit. In size, structure and price they vary greatly. Likewise, a local parent/teacher organization cannot compare its structure with the likes of the United Way, although their accounting and reporting needs are in many ways the same.

With the new Form 990 waiting in the wings, management of information has

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vendors that offer management modules, integration or customization will help us meet these compliance needs.

Rather than rate these software titles comparatively, as they are different fruit indeed, we have considered them in relation to the market they are designed to serve. When searching for a nonprofit accounting package, researching the needs and investment budget for the organization will give you the best basis for that specific comparison. You can also then bring the management functions into focus to potentially meet the nonprofit organization's complete needs.

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### [AccuFund, Inc – AccuFund Accounting Suite](#)

AccuFund recently released the latest version of the AccuFund Accounting Suite, version 3.07, for nonprofit, government and municipal agencies.

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### [Blackbaud, Inc. – The Financial Edge](#)

Blackbaud released version 7.77 of The Financial Edge in late 2008. The solution is best suited for mid-size to large nonprofits and turns accounting data into decision-making power. A true fund accounting program, this powerful system is pleasant in appearance and workability.

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### [Blackbaud, Kintera Division – Blackbaud Fundware](#)

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flagship product, with over 25 years of experience serving small and mid-sized organizations.

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### [CYMA Systems, Inc. – CYMA Not-for-Profit](#)

#### [Edition](#)

CYMA's tenth anniversary edition of its nonprofit software boasts many improvements to the core product. CYMA Systems has served mid-sized operations in the account-ing software industry since 1980.

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### [SIDEBAR: FUND-EZ v. 10](#)

Now in its 17th year, the scalable FUND E-Z accounting system is designed for mid-sized and larger nonprofit entities, providing functions geared to their unique needs.

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### [GMS, Inc. – Accounting & Financial Management/Reporting System](#)

GMS Accounting software was built specifically for not-for-profit organizations with a specific focus on activity-based costing. Rather than re-making ABC, job cost or commercial accounting software, it was designed for nonprofits as a grant and contract accounting system.

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Peachtree has offered small operations excellent operational tools for years, and the latest version of its offering for small to mid-size nonprofits is no exception. Peachtree by Sage Premium Accounting for Nonprofits 2009 builds on the vendor's strong reputation with advanced accounting and analysis tools.

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### Sage Software – MIP

For more than 25 years, Sage MIP Fund Accounting has been serving the needs of nonprofits with excellence; this year is no exception. With many enhancements, particularly the Visual Analyzer tool, Sage MIP is worthy of consideration by any nonprofit organization.

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### Serenic Software – Serenic Navigator

Serenic Navigator is a consistent performer in the not-for-profit accounting realm. Designed for larger organizations, international NGOs and public sector users, strength is the main virtue and best descriptor for this product.

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## 2008 Review of Not-for-Profit Accounting Programs — Comparison Chart

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*For nearly 30 years, Anna has served nonprofit organizations as treasurer,*

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