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The logo is contained within a blue rounded rectangle that has a folded-top effect. The word "intuit." is written in a blue, lowercase, sans-serif font. Below it, the word "ProLine" is written in a large, bold, black, sans-serif font, with a trademark symbol (TM) to its upper right.

intuit.

ProLineTM

888-236-9501

accountant.intuit.com

Intuit has slowly and strategically added solutions to its ProLine family of solutions

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Basic System Functions

Unlike the other products included in this review, Intuit has focused almost exclusively on providing context-sensitive guidance from within its tax preparation applications. As such, the product is aimed at practicing accountants who want to obtain topical guidance at the time they are preparing client tax returns. Although Intuit is expected to launch a stand-alone version of ProLine Tax Research in the near future, this offering is aimed at general use by practitioners, and is not designed to offer the depth and breadth of specialized content needed for practices in obscure areas such as low-income housing tax credits. 4

Content

Rather than create their own content, Intuit has licensed code, regulations, publications, rulings, and expert summaries of key Federal and State income tax topics from BNA to create ProLine Tax Research (CCH and RIA also license BNA content for their IntelliConnect and Checkpoint research services). Intuit claims that the organization of the research and linkage to input fields in its tax preparation offerings results in quicker, more efficient retrieval of on-point answers to issues. Once the results are retrieved, they can be saved in an online document storage service and associated with the return. Content is updated continuously, and a newsletter highlighting current developments is published every two weeks.

The product is focused on individual income tax preparation for both federal and all states, businesses (corp, s corp, partnership), special situations including Foreign taxation, trusts, gift, estate, exempt organizations and private foundations, compensation planning and accounting and recently added both federal and state court cases, as well. As such, the breadth and depth of content available in this offering is substantially less than what is available in the other products. However, the resources available are more than adequate to help the average preparer resolve common issues, and the lack of extraneous content makes it less likely that junior

staff will be distracted by irrelevant content in special industry publications. The

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Customization

Because of this product's focus on providing general guidance within the context of the tax preparation application, user interface customization is not as essential in this offering as it would be if using one of the larger, more expensive offerings. The web version of ProLine Tax Research was unable for review at the time this article was written, so options and customizations included in this new version of the product have not been considered. 4

Integration/Import/Export

Although the integration within the tax preparation applications is a strength of this offering, its limited scope (no accounting & auditing content, and negligible payroll and benefits content) means that this solution may not meet all of the research needs of practitioners. Due to this smaller scope, practitioners may need additional research subscriptions to meet all of their needs for professional research and guidance. 5

Help/Support

Because much of the complexity associated with the use of competing services is not present due to the narrow focus of this research library, there is not as much of a need for specialized training to get the most out of this tool. Intuit's phone support for this product is U.S.-based, and is integrated with the support for the other ProLine products for practitioners. 5

Summary & Pricing

Because of its integration and focused content, ProLine Tax Research offers the quickest way to search for guidance from within Lacerte and ProSeries. A stand-

alone version was launched late in October and can be found at

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as complete research platforms for every type of practice, Intuit has chosen to differentiate itself by offering a value-priced income tax research product (unlimited annual usage is \$849 for a 12-month subscription for an entire firm) with a pay-per-use option for occasional use (\$19.95 for each document). The offering is limited, but is a fast and easy-to-use value-oriented income tax research product for practitioners serving small businesses. The application is embedded into the 2009 and 2010 tax year versions of Lacerte and ProSeries, and a web version of this product will be available in the near future.

2010 Overall Rating 4

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