800-765-7777

accountants.intuit.com/tax/lacerte

BEST FIRM FIT: Full service tax and accounting firms with multiple staff, who want the benefits of integration with many of Intuit's other systems, including QuickBooks data import for business entity returns, document management, research and data analysis.

STRENGTHS

- Easy, intuitive interface
- Wizards to aid with electronic filing and data import
- Support offered by Intuit or through an extensive user community
- Research platform directly integrated into the product
- Data import from scanned source documents or download data directly from financial institutions

POTENTIAL LIMITATIONS

- Not readily available as a remote or Internet based application
- Document Management System, Tax Planner and Tax Analyzer are sold separately

From the **May 2013 review** of **Professional Tax Preparation Systems.**

Lacerte Tax is the top-tier tax compliance platform offered through Intuit and strives to limit time required to produce tax returns. New for the current release are several enhancements including expanding the tax forms and e-file library to include forty-seven (47) new federal and state individual and business offerings in addition to adding the ability to attach PDFs to state and federal e-file. Also added this year were enhancements to the security of transferring data electronically by allowing

emailing password encrypted PDFs directly from Lacerte along with the ability to

Upon entering Lacerte Tax, users are provided a client home screen. This home screen is highly customizable and provides users a number filters to locate specific returns. One unique feature to Lacerte Tax is the ability to jump from the client home screen directly to the on-screen tax form view. This provides users quick access to return data and may aid in quickly locating specific return numbers or other information.

Lacerte Tax provides a Microsoft Outlook style appointment manager to keep track of current and upcoming appointments. This utility is fully contained within Lacerte Tax and does not directly communicate with any time, billing or project management software. The appointment manager utility will also detail out other preparers and their scheduled meetings to assist in accommodation of meeting space and help prevent over booking a preparer. A to-do list may also be maintained in the utility.

Lacerte Tax provides a utility to easily flag and communicate missing data to clients. In virtually any data entry field, users mark data as missing through a right-click shortcut menu. After all items are marked, users may then use the Missing Data Utility to communicate specific information to clients. An email is generated to send to the email address on file and users have the option to further modify the message or other information as necessary. Upon receipt of the information, users can jump directly to the data input fields from hyperlinks within the Missing Data Utility screen.

The electronic filing module has been enhanced for the current release and is now on the Modernized e-File platform. Multiple new state jurisdictions have been added for electronic filing. A wizard is provided to walk users through the process of electronically filing returns. This wizard will also aid users in troubleshooting client files that have been rejected by the IRS or other respective jurisdictions. An mobile

enabled Internet website is maintained for users and provided when the efile for the

Intuit.

Integration: 4.5 Stars

Lacerte Tax provides tight integration points with several other Intuit software solutions. The strongest integration centers on data housed in Intuit's QuickBooks and EasyACCT client write-up software. Users of Excel, QuickBooks and EasyACCT may import trial balance data for most business returns, Schedule C filers and rental property management directly into Lacerte Tax. Each account is automatically assigned a tax code, but users may modify this before full import of the data. Users also have the option to customize import file types to use with other client files that have similar account structures. Lacerte Tax includes a trial balance utility for all business returns. This utility allows trial balance data to be manually entered or imported from Excel, QuickBooks and EasyACCT software. Support for journal entries and account mapping is provided and the trial balance data and mapping will carry forward to future years.

Wizards are provided to aid in importing investment and fixed asset data. Each respective wizard will import data through Excel or CSV file formats and steps the user through the process. Upon completion, all data is automatically posted to the correct data entry screens.

Two add-on product offerings, Lacerte Tax Planner and Lacerte Tax Analyzer, provide another tight integration point. Lacerte Tax Planner integrates with current year tax data and allows users to create customized tax strategies and scenarios for clients to consider. Lacerte Tax Analyzer provides in-depth analysis on data entered and any impact new tax laws may have on client returns. The software also analyzes national average data and prompts users on potential issues before filing the return. In addition, a new Tax Law Impact view has been added to quickly identify clients impacted by the upcoming Tax Year 2013 tax law changes.

Lacerte Tax integrates tax research through a collapsible pane located at the bottom

as the archival storage solution for returns as they are finalized in Lacerte Tax.

An add-on product, Tax Import, further enhances the data entry process by directly importing data. Tax Import allows scanned documents of popular reporting items, such as W-2s, K-1s and Form 1099 investment income, to be automatically imported. Support for 24 financial institutions is also provided for direct import of investment data and transactions.

The e-Organizer (electronic organizer), is included in pricing for all unlimited individual return processing subscribers. This electronic organizer allows users the ability to customize organizer data to send to clients via email. Once received, clients may then populate the organizer with appropriate data and forward any supporting documentation. Upon the organizer returning, users are then able to import this data directly into Lacerte Tax. All imported data is clearly noted in red text and users may accept, delete or override the imported information at any time.

Review notes and tickmarks are also provided in Lacerte Tax. Review notes may be added to nearly all data entry worksheets or completed tax forms. These notes may be assigned to a specific client, but not to a specific preparer or reviewer. All notes are available for review by all users of Lacerte Tax and notes may be edited or deleted, but not marked as cleared. Tickmarks are available though only one level of tickmark is provided and no custom options are available. These limitations may prevent effective use of these tools for larger organizations.

Remote Capabilities: 4 Stars

Intuit only offers Lacerte Tax as a traditional desktop or server/workstation installation option. Remote hosting of Lacerte Tax may be done by users through use of Citrix or similar hosting solutions. This may cause issues for smaller organizations that do not have the dedicated IT staff to setup and maintain this type of

infrastructure. Alternatively, a number of third-party solutions are available that will

Lacerte Tax is a tax compliance solution that provides a high value to small and medium size organizations. With an easy to navigate interface and automatic calculations in the background, users are able to quickly process returns. Several tools are also provided with the software to help ensure the highest level of accuracy as each return is finalized.

A number of pricing options are available for current editions of Lacerte. Unlimited processing of federal, one state and electronic filing is priced around $4,000. Per return pricing is available at $395 plus a charge for each federal, state and electronically filed return. Currently, Intuit is offering a Lacerte Productivity Bundle for $249 and includes Lacerte Tax Analyzer, Lacerte Tax Planner and Lacerte Document Management System.

2013 Overall Rating: 4.5 Stars

Software