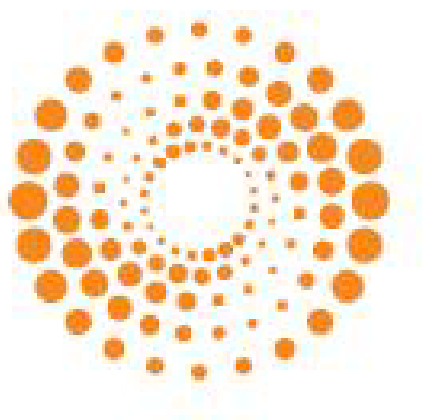


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for professional accounting firms is a relatively new product called Accounting CS.

Brian Tankersley • Feb. 07, 2014



THOMSON REUTERS

Basic System Functions

Accounting CS was initially released as a replacement for the Creative Solutions Accounting application in 2010. Since its initial release, Thomson Reuters has added modules for accounts receivable, accounts payable, and a separate module for payroll preparation (Accounting CS Payroll). Workpapers CS was launched in 2012 to support engagement workpaper templating, preparation, and management for the CS Suite products.

While Accounting CS was initially launched as an on-premises application, Thomson Reuters extended this functionality with Accounting CS Client Access. This

tool, which is only available to firms who run Accounting CS as part of Virtual Office

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and enter the other transactions for the month.

Core Accounting Capabilities

Accounting CS now includes G/L, A/P, A/R, and can be extended to include payroll with Accounting CS payroll. Although the software interfaces with other Thomson Reuters applications, it does not support common add-on applications from third parties such as SmartVault, Bill.com, and Avalara. Sales tax calculation is supported by the application. Payroll journal entries can also be imported from a number of other applications. The application does not support multiple currencies, but it does allow trial balance data to be consolidated across multiple entities by either general ledger account or by account grouping.

Day-to-Day Operations

The product has granular security levels which are based on the firm's role-specific profiles, and both internal and external users can be assigned to these profiles based on their needs. ACS integrates nicely with the other products in the CS Suite, including the client portals, where the accountant and client can exchange documents and other information. Although there is not an instant messaging tool build into the application, the integrated client portals provide an excellent way for client and accountant to communicate securely.

Management Features

Accounting CS does not have configurable dashboards at this time, nor does it support event-driven user-defined alerts. Companies can have up to five different budgets, and standard reports compare budgeted amounts against actual results. Role-based security can restrict user access by menu item as well as by account.

Accounting CS includes a sophisticated report writer for advanced users, and report

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for all clients instead of a separate database for each client, so staff user permissions can be set across multiple clients without opening and editing each individual file.

Works well with the other products in the CS Suite, including Engagement CS, UltraTax CS, and Accounting CS Payroll.

The CS QuickBooks Data Utility will import transactions from a client's QuickBooks data file (Pro, Premier, and Enterprise). After the books are closed, any transactions entered or adjustments made in Accounting CS can be easily exported back to the client's QuickBooks file. The accounts payable module supports an add-on bill payment service which allows ACS users to pay vendors via ACH from within the software.

Help and Support

Since it is available as an on premises application as well as a hosted solution, Accounting CS offers a full help file within the application, as well as a support website. Telephone support is available from 9:00 AM to 9:00 PM ET on weekdays during January and February, and 9:00 AM to 8:00 PM ET from March through December, and is closed for most major holidays outside of busy season. Support is also available on Saturdays from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM through April 4. Thomson Reuters also offers training and consulting services to help firms and clients more effectively implement this solution.

Summary and Pricing

The current write up application for the Thomson Reuters CS Suite of applications for professional accounting firms is a relatively new product called Accounting CS. Although this application can be installed on a local computer for use by a virtual accounting department, this application can also be run using traditional remote hosting or web-based interfaces.

The product fits best for service-based companies and firms that have very tight

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- Excellent solution for production write-up and collaborative accounting with clients, and integrated with the other solutions in the CS Suite.
- The product is designed for heads-down data entry and high volume processing, and has an attractive user interface.
- Accounting CS puts the accountant in total control of the software, and user access can be set for each function and menu option. The product is traditionally provided by an accounting, bookkeeping, or tax professional, and no services are directly marketed to a firm's clients.

Potential Limitations

- Does not have direct integration for automatic financial institution/credit card transactions, although data exported from a bank can be manually imported into the software.
- Like most products in this review, Accounting CS does not support multiple currencies.
- An ecosystem of add-ons for specific business management needs, such as CRM, manufacturing, and inventory which integrate with the data in Accounting CS is not available.
- Payroll is calculated in another application, Accounting CS Payroll, or can be outsourced to Thomson Reuters (MyPay Solutions) or third-parties (ADP, Paychex, and others).
- Limited tools are available in the CS Suite for displaying non-financial metrics, benchmarking, and creating dashboard-style reports using Accounting CS data.

Accounting CS can be purchased as part of Virtual Office CS, the Citrix-hosted version of the CS Suite applications, as part of their Software as a Service package, or can be purchased from Thomson Reuters for local installation. Pricing is available upon request from Thomson Reuters at 800-968-8900.

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Solutions Accounting (CSA). It is true that Thomson Reuters has focused development resources on Accounting CS, and that CSA is currently in maintenance mode. However, CSA continues to be updated for payroll compliance forms and rates. While there isn't a declared "support end date" for Write-Up CS and other CSA products, the majority of all new enhancements and features will be implemented in Accounting CS. We encourage customers to evaluate the many advantages exclusive to Accounting CS when they're planning the timing of transition to the Accounting CS platform.

We have revised the article to exclude the word "discontinued" when referring to Write Up CS, and apologize to all of our readers for any misunderstanding.

Accounting

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