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Basic, Pro and Premium editions, and is one of the only mainstream small business accounting products offering English and Spanish versions (Premium edition only) on the same installation disc. The application is also available in Canadian, French Canadian and International versions, all of which offer basic accounting functions for small businesses that conform to GAAP standards, providing GL, AP, AR, payroll, purchasing, inventory, job costing, and an always-on audit trail. The Pro edition, which also includes time and billing, EFT functions and support for multiple currencies, costs \$299.99 for a single-user version; \$699.99 for up to five users. Simply Accounting 2005 Basic, which supports only one user, costs \$49.99.

Ease of Use/Basic Functionality – 4.5 Stars

Most small business accounting packages shun accounting terminology for plain English, and while Simply Accounting offers this option, it makes it easy to switch back and forth between accounting and non-accounting terms, allowing users with more knowledge of accounting to work in an environment more comfortable to them. In Premium, some of the terminology can also be customized to reflect the specific nature of the business: instead of customers, a bed and breakfast might use the term guests.

After company setup, which is guided by wizards, the system opens to an aesthetically pleasing interface that provides large icons in the middle of the screen for the general areas of the program's functionality. These include such categories as Vendors and Purchases, Customers and Sales, Payroll, and Inventory and Services. Below these, the system offers icons for common activities within these areas, such as making payments under the Vendors section, making sales or printing receipts in the Customers section, or processing paychecks in the Payroll section. Program functions are also accessible from the traditional pull-down menus across the top of the screen, but most users will likely use the well-constructed graphical interface. In

addition to selecting the terminology the system uses for accounting functions,

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customers and other items are entered on traditional Outlook-style data-entry forms. In all, the system provides simplified navigation, with good customization options and a centralized point from which nearly all data can be accessed with a few clicks. The vendor and customer selection screens further provide good support, making it easy to see summary data.

Available Modules/Customization for Vertical Industries – 4.5 Stars

Simply Accounting 2005 does not offer add-on modules; rather, all are included in the base package, whether purchasing the Basic, Pro or Premium edition. The standard modules include those mentioned above (General, Vendors & Purchases, Customers & Sales, Payroll, Inventory & Services) as well as the Projects module, which can be used to monitor individual projects with their own cost centers.

When setting up a company, the user can create the chart of accounts manually or can select from a list of types of companies within key industry groups, such as construction, retail, professional services, property management and accommodations. The system then applies one of more than 100 chart of accounts templates. These accounts can be further customized as necessary, but having them pre-prepared will benefit novice users in initial setup and should help them maintain more appropriate accounts for their business. Simply Accounting 2005 Premium also offers additional “industry-specific” tools including additional custom reporting options.

Expandability – 4.5 Stars

Businesses can easily move within the Simply Accounting product line from Basic to Pro to Premium. Additionally, the system can import from QuickBooks, MYOB and Quicken, allowing users to easily migrate from those programs if they desire.

Reporting & Management Functions – 5 Stars

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features, including time tracking functions that integrate with the payroll capabilities, multi-user access, integration with Outlook, and support for multiple currencies. Additionally, its inventory module is more geared toward manufacturing concerns, with a bill of materials feature to keep track of multi-part single items. Even more, the Premium edition allows company consolidations with customer-defined account ranges and up to 8-digit account numbers; greater customization of the chart of accounts; 100 years of data storage; a more powerful time and billing module that enables EFT as well as 1099 and W-2 preparation; and sales analysis and forecasting tools. If using the payroll functions, a subscription to Simply Accounting's SimplyCARE keeps the program updated with correct payroll tax information.

Audit Trail, Integrity & Accountant Control Tools- 4.5 Stars

Simply Accounting 2005 conforms to GAAP standards and includes a full-time audit trail that monitors all transactions and offers reporting options for monitoring the audit trail. Additionally, password security can be employed at various levels throughout the program. The previously mentioned Daily Business Manager also provides a list of active and pending transactions, allowing an overview of tasks to be completed that day.

Help & Support Options – 4.5 Stars

Sage Software's Simply Accounting 2005 offers a well-designed help utility, with content-specific assistance as well as online support through the Simply Accounting web site. In-person training is available through Simply Accounting Consultants. After installation, support packages are available for an additional cost.

2005 Overall Rating – 4.5 Stars

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