Fort William LLC offers ftwilliam.com, a web-based compliance tool specializing in preparation of Form 5500 Annual Return/Report for Employee Benefit Plans. Hosted on secure servers, the integrated system provides support for all IRS, Department of Labor and Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation forms, delivering them in *.PDF format and providing *.PDF and Microsoft Word-formatted versions of the document to the user.At $250 per year, the 5500 version allows access for up to five concurrent users and can be used to
prepare 5500 returns for any number of clients/companies; the 55Express version is intended for use by individual companies (maximum of two plans) and costs $125 per year.

Learning Curve – 4 Stars
The web-based programs are accessed through the user's web browser, providing simplified navigation links between various components of the system. The system opens to a company selection screen that provides a pull-down list of companies that have been set up. After selection of a company, the user is provided with basic plan sponsor and contact information. If the company has more than one plan, a specific one may be selected from the pull-down list or new ones can be added. Within a selected plan's Edit/Print Menu, the system provides text links to its sections, (such as General Information, Eligibility, Contributions, Vesting, Distributions, In Service Withdrawal/Loans, Plan Operations, Top Heavy and Custom Language Appendices), as well as the Print Menu.
Data entry is made via web-based form fields, with context-specific help available from each form line and data-entry field.

Use/Workflow & Productivity Tools – 5 Stars
Aside from being the only web-based 5500 preparation package reviewed in this section, one of the most unique and beneficial features of the program is its 55Autofill

technology. With this function,

Another useful feature is the system's analysis tools, which conducts more than 200 data-entry checks and alerts the user to potential errors. The status of each section of a 5500 is displayed next to the section list on the Edit/Print Menu, with a link that prompts the error checking and takes the user to the location of the potential error or omission, noting what the problem is. The ftwilliam.com system generates all documents into *.PDF, allowing professionals to easily store them electronically or e-mail them to clients.

Integration/Import & Export – 4.5 Stars
Noted earlier, the 55Autofill technology enables the program to pull data into the system from a database of DOL 5500 data. This means that regardless of what software has been used in prior years, the information is easily retrievable and is automatically recognized by the program, negating the need for conversions or import/export utilities. The ftwilliam.com system produces *.PDF versions of 5500 forms and schedules complete with all required barcodes, enabling barcode scanning by the agencies and electronic distribution and filing.

Support/Training & Help System – 4.5 Stars
The system's inclusion of line-by-line links to official form instructions is helpful, as is page-specific help available from the built-in Help menu. Because of the explanations
it provides, the analysis/error checking tool is also a significant help utility. Fort William LLC provides toll-free and
e-mail-based technical assistance, but does not provide an online support center or formal training programs, although the simplicity of the system may make such training unnecessary for users familiar with 5500 preparation. Because the program is offered as an online application, no installation is necessary, and all program updates are maintained by Fort William technical staff.

Product Evolution & Vendor Vision – 5 Stars

quick preparation of government forms through a web interface that is easy to use and understand. The reporting function provide high-quality electronic copies of forms that include barcoding, and *.PDF output capabilities enable professionals to electronically send copies to their clients and support a paperless office environment. This program is ideal for professionals who specialize in employee benefits programs and makes transitioning to the system easy since all prior-year data can be instantly acquired from a DOL database.

2005 Overall Rating – 4.5 Stars

Technology

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