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From the August 2005 Review of [Engagement & Trial Balance Software](#)

In a sense, CaseWare has long been the TB workpaper management software to benchmark against. Unlike most of the other vendors, electronic workpapers has been the foundation of its product line since the company's inception. CaseWare is designed to tackle the most comprehensive and sophisticated TB-based engagements that you are likely to encounter. That is why it is deployed at one level or another in the top 10 accounting firms. On the other hand, it may not be best suited for the sole practitioner or small firm that is focused primarily on simpler compilation and tax return TB engagements.

Learning Curve – 4 Stars

Due to the fact that CaseWare has the deepest and broadest scope of features and functions of all the products in this category, it is not as easy to learn. If you want to harness the power and efficiency of this system effectively, you must be prepared to invest the time and attention to really learn how it works. Having said that, the user interface is essentially as easy to work with as any of the packages reviewed here. It's more an issue of learning and understanding the scope of the entire system.

Import/Export/Integration – 5 Stars

Since CaseWare does not have the scope of accountant practice applications that some of the other leading vendors offer, the company has focused on integration both on the inbound and outbound information flow as a primary feature. This is to your benefit since it eliminates the pressure of having to stay within a product suite at the expense of foregoing the option to implement the TB workpaper engagement software best suited for your practice.

Some examples of the depth of functionality in this category include the ability to import TB account balances or full GL transaction detail. It offers import utilities for

nearly every popular accounting software on the market, with fully automated

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Trial Balance – 5 Stars

The CaseWare TB features are as comprehensive as you might imagine. The feature set can be overwhelming at first, but as you become more familiar with the system and take advantage of the various standards and templates that can be established, you will appreciate the scope of its capabilities. The following are some of the more notable features of the CaseWare trial balance:

- An auto mapping feature that will populate up to 50 properties per account based on firm-wide standards that you establish for specific account types. This has tremendous timesaving potential.
- Trial balance columns can be sized, sequenced, sorted and hidden to give you near-complete control over how you view the TB. Settings can be established for individual users.
- Separate mapping databases are available for specific industries (i.e., HUD or specific engagement types such as audits). Drag-and-drop feature to assign accounts to mapping codes streamlines the process.
- Multiple TB templates can be established.
- TB columns can be frozen while you scroll left to right to navigate wide reports more effectively.
- Individual TB accounts can be locked to prevent additional entries or adjustments while the rest of the TB accounts remain open.
- The journal entry dialogue box can be customized.
- Supports foreign currency conversion.
- Support for monthly, quarterly, semi-annual and customized interim reporting periods.

The bottom line is that the CaseWare TB is a powerful tool that provides a considerable amount of flexibility to meet the needs of your firm's engagements.

Workpaper Management – 5 Stars

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off to quickly assess the status of the review process.

- Any document type (i.e., Word, Excel, *.PDF, etc.), can be dragged and dropped into the engagement folder.
- A file compression feature reduces the engagement folder size by up to 80 percent to conserve disk space.
- Comprehensive check-in/check-out feature with a “signed out master” feature to allow exclusive WP editing.
- Lead sheets can be reformatted and reordered.
- Customizable tick marks with the ability to utilize your own graphic images.
- Any individual workpaper can have multiple hyperlink references to the TB and other workpapers.
- Extensive issue tracking and management system provides capability to archive, roll forward or clear out individual issues/notes.
- Comprehensive audit trail history of all activity within an individual WP document including user ID, date, time and nature of the activity.
- Extremely powerful historical “roll back” feature allows you to review the status of any WP document as of a specified date/time and compare it to the current status of the WP.

To summarize the WP management features of CaseWare, you're unlikely to run into a limitation for which

you can't find a work around. The main issue will be developing the depth of knowledge to optimize the use of the system for your engagements.

Financial Reporting – 5 Stars

CaseView is the powerful reporting module that generates your financial statements, as well as any other customized workpaper reports. CaseView utilizes an interface that combines the appropriate features of Word and Excel into a single application. This allows you the best of both worlds in terms of using word processing features

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Overall Value – 5 Stars

CaseWare unquestionably offers the most comprehensive features and functions of all of the products reviewed here. The larger the firm, or the more complex the engagements, the greater the value CaseWare brings to the table. The vendor has taken many steps to simplify the use of the software for “lighter” engagements. Sole practitioners and very small firms in which most TB engagements are completed from beginning to end by the same person may not need all of the horsepower CaseWare provides. However, the company has many small firms in Canada and other countries that have taken advantage of the ability to turn off a lot of the advanced features and use the program effectively. CaseWare Working Papers costs \$499 for a single user; \$1,299 for up to five users. Additional pricing is available from the vendor.

2005 Overall Rating – 5 Stars

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