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Work-Style Payroll Software

Advanced Micro Solutions offers A-T-F (After-the-Fact) Payroll as an add-on to its 1099-Etc tax and information return compliance package that focuses on 1098, 1099, W-2, W-3, 940, and associated form compliance. Although named A-T-F, the module can also be used to process “live” payroll batches on a continuing basis, with support for all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, including federal and state versions of forms 940, 940-EZ, 941, 1040 Sch H (for household employees) and state quarterly returns. The base price of 1099-Etc (required for the A-T-F Payroll module to function) is \$75; the A-T-F module is \$105, which includes MICR printing. The laser printing module is \$75 and the magnetic media/e-filer module is \$105; e-filing is based on number of forms filed electronically. Direct Deposit is also offered through a partnership with National Payment Corporation (www.directdeposit.com) for an additional charge. The software can be used by any number of PC users at a firm's primary office location.

EASE-OF-USE/DATA ENTRY — 4.5 Stars

A-T-F Payroll opens to a small, uncluttered window that provides various drop-down menus across the top for accessing available modules, system utilities, help and to exit the program. The main part of this window shows program information, such as program year, update information and setting up of multiple user controls. Selection of the A-T-F module prompts a new subwindow for selecting the Payer, or client employer, along with options for managing and creating new clients. Once within a client's files, the program defaults to a new window with more pull-down menus and general information that most users won't care about: the directory of the files, the program year (again), the printer and

device. This intro screen would be much more useful with a menu of tasks or

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of that employer. Pull-down menus specific to printing checks and employee management are available from this list of employees.

The system provides simplified entry screens for data entry, but some screens require hitting the "Quit" button when finished. The system even prompts the user to do so: "Hit Quit to Save." I'd like to see a "save" button instead. Overall, the interface is simple enough to learn, but navigation can be a little awkward at times.

FEATURES — 3.5 Stars

A-T-F Payroll can support up to 1,999 client employers and up to 9,999 employees (per employer), with 30 user-definable fields for gross pay additions, deductions and contribution plans. It offers up to eight hourly rates per employee and also supports tipped employees. In addition to federal, the system can be set to automatically calculate state and local withholding. A-T-F can also calculate multiple overtime types, and track holiday, vacation and sick leave accruals. Also, being multi-client, the program allows each client to have a password to limit access to each client.

REPORTING CAPABILITIES — 3.5 Stars

The system includes a selection of standard reports that are available from the Reports pull-down menu on the Payroll module's master screen. Reports can be printed to pre-printed stock or, with the addition of the optional Laser module, to plain paper. A-T-F Payroll supports all 1099 versions, as well as 940, 940-EZ, 941, 941-B, 943, 1042S, 1096, W-2, W-2C, and state forms. Forms can be printed on pre-printed stock or, with the addition of the optional Laser module, on plain paper. Forms can be printed for multiple clients simultaneously. Payroll checks may be printed as needed or in batches. Through the primary W-

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AMS includes free phone, fax and e-mail-based technical support with its software, and program updates are available from the company's web site, along with an online support center and FAQ section. The built-in Windows-based Help utility offers comprehensive content as well as an electronic user's guide.

SUMMARY

1099-Etc A-T-F Payroll is simple to use and is a bargain at about \$180 for the base W-2/1099 program and payroll modules, but it may not be suitable for very large-scale payroll activities (1,000 employees or more). It is best suited for professional tax and payroll preparers with clients having needs that range from preparing W-2s/1099s to quarterly after-the-fact payroll to live payroll. The company notes that the product emphasis is on being a system that can span a wide range of needs with a high level of government compliance at a reasonable price.

2005 Overall Rating — 4 Stars

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