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TECHNOLOGY

Sage Software — Timeslips

800-285-0999 www.Timeslips.com

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From the November 2005 [Review of Time & Billing Software](#)

Timeslips by Sage has long been the Coca-Cola of the time and billing market. That is, the name is almost a generic term for time and billing software in general. The program was first developed in 1985, so it has earned this ubiquity over the past 20 years. Timeslips is geared toward small and midsize businesses, with off-the-shelf packages available supporting one, five or 10 users. In addition to time and expense tracking, budgeting, AR tracking and billing, the system includes industry-specific templates for a variety of business types, including accounting and other professional services firms. It also provides pre-designed billing items for accounting and tax services. With this latest version, pricing for Timeslips has gone up to \$449.99 for a single user; \$799.99 for five networked users; and \$1,449.99 for 10 seats. Additional stations can also be added.

Rhonda McIntyre is a technology consultant who assists clients with software evaluation, selection, implementation and ongoing support. She is currently a sole practitioner who does work in Ohio with some work in surrounding states, and she continues to work closely with her previous employer, a regional accounting firm. She says that she has worked with Sage products for quite some time, and has used many time and billing applications over the years. When asked what

drove her to select Timeslips, she said, “I received a mailer and did some research as well as talking to others in the same industry.”

McIntyre says Timeslips is very flexible, fits many different situations and meets her needs, adding that it does a “better job with the billing piece than many high-end products on the market at a much lower total cost of ownership.”

She has found great benefit in the program’s setup capabilities, from multiple billing rules to master clients to customized reports.

Ease of Use/Program Set Up — 4.5 Stars

Timeslips is fairly simple to install on workstations, with an interface that guides users through initial entry of firm information, timekeepers, time and expenses, and other data. As noted above, the system includes templates for a few types of professions, including accounting, legal, construction, architecture and computer consulting firms.

For the most part, these templates help make the technical lingo consistent with the profession, such as using the word client in an accounting firm, as compared with the term case in a legal firm or project or task in a construction firm. The templates also aid in setting up commonly billed activities, such as tax preparation, write-up and other typical work product. Unfortunately, the setup wizard doesn’t use intuitive terminology in its own right, opting to use the phrase “new database” instead of “new company,” which most small business software users would probably be more comfortable with. But this is a minor point.

Timeslips’ user interface combines a Basic Navigator subwindow that can also be set to appear as a vertical menu, displaying key functions of the workflow cycle and allowing quick access to these tasks, along with the primary program window that uses traditional icons and pull-down menus. Time and Expense

data-entry activities are easily performed through simplified data-entry forms that utilize pull-down selection lists for user, task and client, as well as the ability to set non-billable time, holds, recurring billing or make adjustments. Alternatively, timekeepers can enter time and expense data through a spreadsheet view, allowing edits or batch time entry for multiple or single employees.

Timekeepers

can also enter optional activity description, estimated time, reference notes

and other comments, with control over which lines appear on billing documents. Security controls enable limiting access to override and other managerial features. In addition to stopwatch-like task timers, Timeslips allows multiple instances of these timers to be open concurrently, if desired. The TSTimer feature also offers an additional time tracking function. Remote access capability enables users to enter time and expense data when away from the office.

The system offers some customization capabilities, including the dockable Navigator and the ability to move and rename components. An interesting customization

feature in Timeslips 2006 is its ability to detect unused features and offer the user the ability to remove them from menus or help the user learn more about the features.

Management Functions — 5 Stars

Another customization feature that enhances managerial supervision is Timeslips Today, which provides a user-customized dashboard that can display slip totals, budget figures, AR transactions, account balances and other frequently referenced data. The system also includes analysis functions that can track overhead costs and monitor productivity on firm and employee levels, and help manage AR and billing functions, including retainer funds, write-offs, partial payments, credits, refunds, aging and interest on a per-client basis. The system supports up to 20 rates that can be defined per client, staff member or task item. The program also includes flat rate billing and supports contingency fees. Through use of the spreadsheet time data interface or the Slip List, management can review, sort and filter staff time and expense entries.

Billing & Reporting — 5 Stars

The system's billing program allows generation of invoices at any time and allows generation of e-mailable bills and statements. The billing utility allows drag-and-drop design of bill formatting, along with a spellchecker and other features that ease the process, such as the system's pre-bill worksheet that enables reviewing of client billable and non-billable activities before actual bill creation. Billing can be performed by batch or filtered to run for only specified clients, certain activities or staff members. The Billing Assistant provides help while performing these activities.

Timeslips includes more than 120 pre-designed invoices, reports and client letters that can be printed from any screen and can be customized using the

built-in Report Designer, which works similarly to the program's Bill Designer, to allow the creation of detailed and summary level reports and graphs. Newly added drill-down capability helps users get to specific transactions and time or expense slips from reports.

Integration — 5 Stars

Timeslips can print to Excel or e-mail and offers strong integration with Outlook's calendaring functions as well, sharing tasks, appointments and meetings between the programs. The program can also export to *.RTF format and integrates with more than 20 accounting systems. For remote access and data entry, Timeslips can be used with PDAs.

User Support & Help — 4.5 Stars

Timeslips includes numerous help features such as wizards for completing setup, billing and reporting tasks, and context-specific help and right-click menus that provide information and shortcuts for virtually every part of the program. The system's help utility is well-designed, with a traditional searchable index, as well as an online user's guide, how-tos, more than 25 training videos and links to various sections of the Sage Software web site. Support plans are offered through the company and through its resellers. Sage also offers live and online training, and resellers offer installation assistance.

2005 Overall Rating: 5 Stars

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