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FRx Software Corporation — Microsoft FRx

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From the December 2005 [Review of High-End Accounting Software](#)

You may have noticed that a number of the accounting products reviewed in this and other issues of the magazine feature integration with products from FRx Software. FRx Software is a wholly owned subsidiary of Microsoft that develops and markets a number of products and add-on components that provide advanced reporting and budgeting and planning capabilities. These products piggyback onto many popular accounting packages and provide additional power by reading the data already in your accounting application databases.

The FRx Software product family consists of Microsoft FRx (previously called FRx Financial Reporter), Microsoft Forecaster (budgeting/planning) and Microsoft Integration Designer (GL application integration). In addition, the Microsoft FRx product has a number of other service packs and add-on modules available for enhancing the basic product capabilities, including FRx Report Designer, FRx Report Launcher, FRx DrillDown Viewer, FRx Report Manager, FRx Report Server and FRx Currency Translation. Two more recently released add-on modules include FRx Report Wizard and FRx Report Manager.

Once the Microsoft FRx product is installed with a compatible accounting package, the report designer uses a building-block methodology for creating financial statements. The building blocks include Row Layout, Column Layout and Reporting Trees, which need to be defined in order to create reports. Rows are where you select accounts and define totals, calculations and if/then parameters. Columns define the period information, like actuals, budget or other types of data within a report. Reporting Trees are used to create a hierarchical picture of your organization to define or change various reporting entities. Once defined, these building blocks can be saved and used in other reports to speed the creation of similar reports. These components are then used to design the actual report using a WYSIWYG designer that has a grid of rows and columns.

Geared toward the inexperienced user, the new FRx Report Wizard is a tool to help reduce the complexity of creating some of the more common reports that a business might want. It can create a standard balance sheet, monthly trial balance and three types of income statements (Current and YTD, Rolling Quarter, and Actual vs. Budget) using a wizard-based process that presents a limited range of choices and then creates a report from those choices.

FRx Report Manager is a new tool used to streamline the financial report book production and distribution process, particularly for organizations that require a high volume of reports that change regularly. This module uses the term Report Book to denote a specific set of financial statements for a particular user or group of people. Each “chapter” of the report book is used to display appropriate portions of the company’s financial information for a certain audience. For example, revenue reports may be available to sales personnel, while detailed profit/loss reporting might be available to company managers or directors.

Security levels can be applied to each chapter, which makes each section available to the group of users that you define. Report books created with FRx Report Manager can be presented in their native report format, whether that application is SQL Reporting Services, Excel, Microsoft FRx, the accounting application or another file type.

Microsoft FRx provides a powerful set of tools for the organization that needs to go beyond the built-in reports provided with their accounting package. Although the setup process can be a little bit daunting, the sophisticated user will find the power and flexibility more than enough to meet demanding custom

reporting

needs. Users who prefer a more canned or automated approach will appreciate the new FRx Report Wizard's capabilities.

Numerous presentation and output formats ensure that your organization's reports will reach the consumers of that information in a timely and efficient manner. Contact your software vendor to see if Microsoft FRx is available for your accounting software package. □

Article

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