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*From the April/May 2006 [Review of Tax Prep Suites](#)*

If you were irritated at some point during the tax season because some forms were not yet approved and included with your tax software, you're not alone. All of the major professional tax software vendors experienced delays this year, and many received comments from their users. Next year, before your frustration breaks through, consider that it may not be the software developer's fault.

Each year, vendors must submit the electronic version of each of their federal, state and municipal forms to each of the entities for which it will be used. With hundreds of forms requiring approval by hundreds of various agencies, this can be a challenging process, and one that the vendors don't control. This often results in one tax program having delays with one type of form, while another program is delayed with a different one. The problem may be too much technology too quickly. As states adopt differing rules on electronic submission and allow more types of entities to e-file, the workload of the agencies' staffs increases, often causing unpredictable delays. Add to this the frequent modifications in tax code as well as a variety of relief legislation, and delays become even worse.

While this tax season's delays varied between programs and specific forms, none of the vendors were immune — all federal and state forms simply will never be approved by Jan. 1 or even Jan. 15. It just can't happen because of the approval processes at the various agencies involved. So next year, when there will inevitably be delays again, don't blame your vendor ... and remember the old adage about the grass: "It's NOT always greener on the other side of the fence." □

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