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the Nov. 2006 Review of Time & Billing Systems

After more

than 20 years on the market, Timeslips by Sage is among the most mature time and billing systems, providing a very well-developed application that incorporates all of the most recent technologies for remote data entry and integration with small business accounting programs. It offers tools for time and expense management,

billing, AR management and other business functions. Timeslips includes industry-specific

templates for most time-based billing professions, which automatically populates many tasks and services offered by a firm, and allows the system to utilize language appropriate to the accounting profession in its reporting and communication

tools. Pricing is \$449.99 for a single user managing any number of staff; \$799.99 for five users; and \$1,449.99 for a 10-user license.

Ease of Use/Navigation Features — 5 Stars

Timeslips guides users through all of the initial setup processes using wizards and other features that greatly eases this task, and its templates automatically input items appropriate to the type of business. For accounting firms, the system includes write-up, tax prep, tax consulting, financial planning and other options, saving at least a few minutes if not more. After setup, the primary user interface consists of a redesigned Navigator window that provides icon access to the primary functions of the system, such as entering time and expense data, accessing clients and activities, reporting functions and other items. Users can select from different Navigator styles, based on roles within the firm, such as Office Manager or Business Owner, that show tasks specific to that role. These Navigators can be customized to display the functions most important to the people that perform

those roles in each firm. The Navigator also shows customizable panels that

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populate some of the necessary information.

The data-entry forms, called Slip Entry Sheets, are very intuitive and provide simple selection lists for timekeeper, client, task, project and other information, with various billing and rate options such as mark-ups and mark-downs. Much of this data can be automatically filled in by the program, including rates and task descriptions. In addition, note fields have font style control and enhanced spelling and grammar checking, a unique and appreciated feature for a notes section. The spreadsheet method of time entry provides more of an at-a-glance

option, allowing a user to view, input and access an entire week's worth of time entries. The system also provides options for running timers, duplicating time slips, making selected expense items recurring, and has time/expense slip search capabilities.

Management Functions — 5 Stars

Timeslips can manage any number of clients and projects, as well as multiple billing methods. It supports retainer-based accounting and can use up to 20 rates that can be based on staff member, client or task/service. The Timeslips AR management functions provide a fairly comprehensive system that handles payments,

partial payments, split billing, write-offs, credits, refunds and fund transfers, discount rules and provides extensive reporting options. With the addition of the Slip Approval function, the system now provides a more organized review method, enabling management to maintain greater control over what, when and how items get billed to clients.

Timeslips can now create timesheets from e-mails, tasks, meetings and appointments in the user's Outlook program, and an optional add-on feature enables

the use of PDAs and web-based access to the system. Additional functions are

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and allow drag-and-drop modification of report and invoice layouts and components.

Reports can also be enhanced with custom graphs and charts created from within the system, and reports and invoices can be printed at any time. Users can access and edit records, such as clients, slips and payments, directly from reports and invoices viewed on-screen.

A Billing Assistant helps guide users through creation of pre-bills, batch or individual processing, and other tasks. Reports and invoices can be output to *.PDF, which allows for electronic storage or e-mailing directly from the program. The system can also create Excel and *.RTF formats. Timeslips even captures images of printed invoices, allowing users to reprint older invoices and resend them to their customers.

Integration — 4.5 Stars

Timeslips integrates with Outlook for e-mail communications, as well as for creating timesheets from e-mails and calendar items. This two-way integration also takes meetings and other tasks from Timeslips and creates the appropriate activities in Outlook. For accounting purposes, the program links to most small business accounting systems. PDA and remote web-based access are available as optional add-ons.

User Support & Help — 4.5 Stars

Timeslips provides great user assistance from the first steps of setting up company, staff and client data, to continued support functions like the Billing Assistant and other wizards, including one function that lets users know of features they haven't used. The system's Help functions include right-click menus and an index-based Help menu item. Online resources at Sage

Software's support website include numerous training videos, a user's

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