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Oct. 01, 2007

From the October 2007 Issue

It's no secret that the needs of nonprofit organizations differ tremendously from those of for-profit entities. Just how different are they? Take a look at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and read Circular No. A-122, where you can browse through the established Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations — all 48 pages.

Some of the issues the OMB circular addresses include Direct and Indirect Costs, Allocable Costs, and Indirect Allocable Costs criteria. Another issue nonprofits will soon have to address is the complete overhaul of IRS Form 990. Due to be implemented in 2008, the newly revised form will now require 15 schedules including detail on receivables from and payables to organizational officers, directors and trustees. Additionally, all non-cash contributions will need to be reported and itemized, and there will be a cap (5 percent) added to miscellaneous organizational expenses.

Because of these new requirements, it will be more important than ever to have a software system in place that performs the necessary functions that nonprofit organizations require. Such functions include a solid allocations module that allows you to allocate both direct and indirect costs, perform advanced calculations, and ensure compliance with the previously mentioned OMB cost principles.

A grant administration function can also prove important, allowing users to keep a solid history of all grants, manage funds, and control budgets and future expenses. An encumbrances module will allow users to adequately plan for all future expenditures, with the added ability to track and budget expenses properly.

As well, a program's AR capability must be able to sufficiently track

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answer would be no. But the more detailed answer is that many nonprofits, particularly those with specialized scope, require only a small portion of the functions that many of these products offer.

Here are the review categories for the 2007 review of not-for-profit products:

Ease of Use/Flexibility

It's important to note that, generally, the more complex a program is, the more detailed and complex the system setup will be. Though not always the case, I tried to examine general determining factors such as company setup, data- entry screens and lookup options.

Modules/Scalability

Though the majority of the programs reviewed this year are modular in scope, I looked at system function in general, along with available modules, add-ons and any other third-party applications that may work in conjunction with the product. I also considered versions available. Does it offer a single-user system? Is it better for smaller companies? Will it be able to support a growing organization?

Features & Functionality

What does the program actually do? All of these products offer strong accounting functionality, but what makes this program stand out? What makes it irresistible to the nonprofit organization?

Reporting

Reporting functionality is important to all businesses, but it's even more important to nonprofit organizations. Some organizations have been known to change software products simply based on reporting capability (or lack thereof).

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websites, where you'll find extensive information, links to interactive presentations and demo downloads. No one can assess the value of a product as well as the person or organization that will be using it.

[AccuFund Inc. – AccuFund Accounting Suite](#)

AccuFund Inc. offers financial and accounting software solutions for nonprofit organizations as well as government entities. The latest release of the AccuFund Accounting Suite (Version 3.5) contains many enhancements to the core product.

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[Review](#)

[Blackbaud, Inc. – The Financial Edge](#)

Blackbaud, Inc. has released version 7.7 of The Financial Edge, which is designed to provide midsize to larger nonprofit organizations with excellent accounting functionality and analytic tools to make strategic management decisions in the nonprofit arena.

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[Cougar Mountain Software – Cougar Mountain FUND Suite](#)

Cougar Mountain Software recently released Version 12 of its FUND Suite, providing small to midsize nonprofits and government entities with a comprehensive financial program. This new release contains numerous upgrades and enhancements throughout the system.

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[Review](#)

[Donald R. Frey – BUCS Fund Accounting](#)

Donald R. Frey and Company, Inc. has been designing nonprofit software for small to midsize nonprofit organizations and government entities for more than 30 years. With the release of version 10.1, BUCS continues its tradition of timely enhancements to its fund accounting software.

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[FUND E-Z Development Corp. –](#)

[FUND E-Z Fund Accounting Software](#)

FUND E-Z Development Corporation has provided small to midsize nonprofit organizations with an affordable software product for over 16 years. The latest version (Version 9) of FUND E-Z continues this tradition...

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[Intuit – QuickBooks: Premier](#)

[Nonprofit Edition 2007](#)

QuickBooks: Premier Nonprofit Edition 2007, one of Intuit's vertical editions of QuickBooks, combines the convenience of QuickBooks with basic nonprofit functionality to provide smaller nonprofit organizations with an easy way to track expenses...

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the governmental sector, Sage MIP Fund Accounting continues to enhance its popular fund accounting software. Version 8 contains several new system modules...

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Sage Software Inc. – Peachtree

by Sage Premium Accounting for Nonprofits 2008

Sage Software has recently released Peachtree by Sage Premium Accounting for Nonprofits 2008. This latest version contains several additions to the core product along with enhancements to the industry-specific nonprofit edition.

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Serenic Corporation – Serenic

Navigator

Serenic Navigator from Serenic Corporation is a fully integrated financial and business operations software product primarily designed for larger nonprofit organizations, international NGOs and the public sector.

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