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*From the June/July Review of Small
Business Accounting Systems*

Client Bookkeeping Solution (CBS) is a small business bookkeeping and management system from Tax & Accounting, a business of Thomson Reuters (formerly Thomson Tax & Accounting). The program is not offered directly to small businesses, but rather through professional firms using the CS Professional Suite. Installed as a desktop program on the client's computers, CBS includes traditional, double-entry accounting with a chart of accounts set up by the accountant, allowing clients the ability to enter daily transactions, process payroll, manage payables and receivables, print checks, and generate reports in-house.

The system prepares data for use by the professional programs in the CS line, making the import of the data very simple. CBS can also be used as a remote program through an optional hosted version of the system called CBS ASP by using the vendor's NetClient CS portals. The complete bundled desktop package for Client Bookkeeping Solution starts at \$600, and CBS ASP costs \$35 (per client per month). CBS packages are billed to the professional accounting firm, which can then bill the client. The program can also be used by clients to support multiple businesses, if desired.

Ease of Use/Basic Functionality — 4.5 Stars

CBS is geared for use by small businesses whose professional accountant uses the CS suite of professional accounting programs. The system opens into an interface that is similar to most of the CS programs, but very much tailored to the much simpler needs of a small business client. The interface provides a large work area, with a primary vertical menu on the left that gives access to each of the core modules, including system administrative tasks, the Payables and

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Data-entry screens are consistent throughout, with many of the timesaving convenience

features that are present in other CS programs, including tabs for quick movement between data groups and smart selection lists for many items. The accountant plays a key role in initially setting up the system, which allows customization to the needs of each client without cluttering up the interface with features they don't need. The program can also be set to automatically notify the accountant by e-mail when a client user performs specific tasks.

Core Accounting/ Security Functions — 3.5 Stars

CBS provides strong basic accounting functions that are generally presented in client-friendly formats, allowing them to easily access core tasks like transactions, checkwriting and paying vendors, without getting into more difficult accounting processes. The charts of accounts can be easily set up by the professional accountant to maintain proper GL, while the AP and AR modules work fluidly with the accounts to post appropriate transactions and journal entries. Clients can also e-mail invoices and statements to their customers. The included CheckWriter function supports online banking, including bill payments and fund transfers, while allowing customization of check layouts and printing of deposit slips. The program's payroll functions, if enabled, allow clients to process their own payroll in-house. CBS maintains a full-time complete audit trail, and security levels can be set to restrict certain users to specific areas. The e-mail alerts to the accountant also provide a safety mechanism by keeping the professional aware of certain activities.

Reporting & Management Functions — 3.5 Stars

Each of the modules contains reporting options specific to that area, including AP and AR aging, customer activity reports, cash flow snapshots, and budgeting

functions. The Financial Statements module provides interim financials. If using

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client's accountant and for receiving files back after write-up, correcting entries and reconciliation tasks. The CS Professional Suite can import from major SMB accounting packages, including QuickBooks and Peachtree. CBS offers export options via a preview of pre-defined reports for PDF, Word or Excel. CBS also offers direct export to Outlook and Access, as well as other programs.

Help & Support Options — 4 Stars

CBS includes a traditional Help index and assistive features like right-click menus and screen-specific guidance, while a library of PDF guides is included, covering topics ranging from direct deposit, payroll tasks and credit card processing. The program is easy to use and should require little training. The vendor does not offer direct support for small business clients using the program, unless authorized by the professional accountant.

Relative Value — 4.5 Stars

CBS is a great option for small businesses whose accountants use Tax & Accounting's line of professional programs. Since the system works the same way as the professional suite, data is much more usable. Plus, the system is easier to learn for small business owners/managers than full accounting programs because the features can be limited to only those that they will need.

2008 Overall Rating: 4 Stars

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