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From the Nov. 2008 Issue

The small business accounting revolution that started in the mid-1990s continues to greatly shape almost every aspect of the services that professional accountants provide. Once upon a time, clients would come in once a month with their register tape, receipts, bank statements, bills and other documents.

I wasn't there, but from the first-hand accounts of professionals who were, it was often a major chore to tackle these paper mountains, tediously entering all of the transactions, reconciling their accounts and, eventually, producing financial statements. But while client-side accounting software has eliminated most of the paper and massive data-entry functions, many of these same professionals see the end result still being a considerable task. The reason is that clients now have the ability to perform much of their own bookkeeping tasks, but few have the knowledge to do them properly.

Instead of spending hours manually entering client data, today's accountant must transfer the client's electronic data into his or her own accounting system and then spend hours hunting through transactions, making adjusting entries

and trying to educate their clients about general accounting principles. Once complete, there's the issue of updating the client's system with the corrected data, while incorporating any new transactions that have been processed while the write-up was underway.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- **Write-Up Functions:**
 - Bank Reconciliation

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In essence, the core services covered by the term write-up have greatly turned into a forensic art where the professional accountant studiously looks for errors and tries to re-establish the integrity of client accounts in order to give them a clearer picture of the financial health of their business. Client software has also helped turn many accounting professionals into technology consultants, like it or not, because when the client has a question about their financial software they instinctively call their accountant.

The vendors of write-up software have finally caught on to the many dilemmas posed by the client-accountant relationship and have been improving collaboration functions. Some have streamlined data transfer functions, while others have approached the issue by providing accountants with remote access to the client's live data.

One of the more promising developments is through the true integration of a client's bookkeeping package and the professional's accounting system. Although not designed for write-up, the fully web-based, client-side NetSuite accounting program offers full online access capabilities to accountants. Intuit's QuickBooks Online offers similar capabilities to the small business market.

But for true write-up functionality, with strong GL, reconciliation and financial reporting and analysis, the trend was started by the Thomson Reuters Write-Up CS program in conjunction with its Client Bookkeeping Solution. Taking the process one step further, AccountantsWorld developed a single, web-based professional accounting suite that includes a client-side accounting portal that the accountant can tailor to meet the needs and capabilities of each client. While client errors will always occur, this model eliminates the need for data transfer since both parties are using the same data. It also keeps the professional in total control of the client's live data at all times.

We first wrote about this new, “unified client accounting and write-up”

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will become increasingly profitable.

AccountantsWorld – Accounting Relief

Accounting Relief is the only fully web-based system in this review section and approaches the accountant-client relationship in a different manner. The professional accounting program offers the traditional full complement of write-up and trial balance functions.

[Read Full Review](#)

CCH, a Wolters Kluwer business – ProSystem fx Write-Up

As a part of CCH’s comprehensive line of professional accounting and practice management applications, ProSystem fx Write-Up offers a fully integrated option for accountants providing this service to their business clients.

[Read Full Review](#)

CCH Small Firm Services – ATX & TaxWise Client Write-Up

Both ATX and TaxWise, now operated by CCH through its Small Firm Services (SFS) division, are well-known for their comprehensive tax suites geared toward small to mid-sized tax-focused offices.

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Intuit, Inc. – QuickBooks Premier

Accountant Edition

Intuit's QuickBooks Accounting line is obviously well-known across both the small business market and the professional accounting market, with the company's mid-range versions of the system, Premier, available in various industry-specific formats.

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Micronetics International – Xpert

Write-Up for Windows

Micronetics offers a full accounting suite for small and mid-sized businesses through its Xpert Financials system, which provides modules for GL, AR, AP, inventory, payroll, reconciliation and other key components.

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Thomson Reuters – Write-Up CS

The Write-Up CS system from the Tax and Accounting arm of Thomson Reuters is a comprehensive professional write-up system that combines general ledger, journals, bank reconciliation, after-the-fact payroll with compliance and financial reporting capabilities.

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Sidebar – PC Software Accounting, Inc.

It's nice to occasionally note smaller technology

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Technology

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