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Dec. 01, 2008

*From
the Dec. 2006 Review of Website Tools for Accountants*

The Accountant's Office Online suite from AccountantsWorld is the central component of the vendor's collection of online services, combining a website building tool for professional firms, as well as a portal for firm staff to access online accounting programs. It also offers secure access for clients to access records that the firm has made available to them. As such, Accountant's Office Online is much more than just a website building and maintenance tool. Through this system, accountants and their staffs can utilize their AccountantsWorld

programs, including Payroll Relief AC, Accounting Relief AC and other applications, through an online interface that enables them to access the systems from any location, whether in the office or on the road. The system costs \$695 per year for the website/portal, with no initial setup cost. A personalized domain name (www.YourFirm.com) is also included in the cost, and setup is handled through the system, including domain registration and hosting. Access to accounting applications through the system requires user licenses for those programs. AccountantsWorld offers an optional website setup service for a one-time fee of \$99.

WEBSITE SETUP/MAINTENANCE — 4.5 Stars

Once logged into Accountant's Office Online, it is very simple to understand the basics of creating a website, with a good selection of pre-built templates that allows novice users to quickly get a professional-quality website up and running. The website building interface provides buttons for choosing a template, designing the general structure of the site, or editing content, and will soon include a guided wizard. After selecting the general template, the Design Website

button allows the user to simply check off the boxes of features and content

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for controlling font, style, cutting and pasting, creating links and other options, as well as a collection of customizable pre-written narrative content and stock business images. Templates, images and general page content can be changed or edited as often as desired. Initial setup of a basic firm website is exceptionally simple and can be performed in as little as five to 10 minutes, although incorporation of logos, graphics and customized content will take a few minutes more.

AUTOMATED CONTENT — 4 Stars

Accountant's Office Online allows up to six additional automated content pages. The firm can select from dozens of options, including a tax center, online tax organizer, accounting and small business newsletters, daily tax and financial news, calendars, dozens of financial calculators, tax refund tracking, and other options. AccountantsWorld automatically updates the content on these pages, and newsletters can be customized for the website or even sent to client lists via a built-in e-mail tool. The automated content adds a dynamic component to the firm's website, providing continuously updated news and tools for visitors, but unfortunately is limited by the number of pages that can be added.

VISUAL QUALITY/USER NAVIGATION — 4.5 Stars

From a visitor's perspective, the websites created through Accountant's Office Online are crisp and professional, with options for navigation menus on the side or across the top. Automated content, such as the newsletters, provide excellent broad support for small businesses and individuals. The selection of available calculators is very impressive. You can visit www.vanderspekcpas.com for an example of a website created through Accountant's Office Online.

SPECIAL FEATURES/TOOLS — 4.5 Stars

In addition to providing users with a registered personalized domain name for the firm, Accountant's Office Online includes 10 e-mail addresses that

are also tied to that domain (mail@YourFirm.com), which further helps in the

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SITE MARKETING — 4 Stars

The vendor hosts an Accountant Directory that automatically includes the site of its users. A submission service is included with the system, which promotes firm websites to Google, Yahoo!, MSN, AOL and other major search engines. The customizability of its newsletters and other content, with the ability to send the newsletters directly from the online system, are also beneficial to branding a firm by providing clients with valuable content. The system maintains a basic visitor tracking system for monitoring hits on the website, and, as noted earlier, Accountant's Office Online includes a personalized website domain name and hosting.

SUPPORT — 5 Stars

AccountantsWorld includes free technical support for users, whether setting up a page for the first time or editing/changing content. An online support center also offers DIY resources such as webinars and tutorials. Websites, applications and client data are stored in a secure hosting facility.

SUMMARY

Accountant's Office Online offers a low-cost website solution that, although very simple to use and appealing to the pocketbook, still produces a professional website with a strong selection of added features, including secure client collaboration, automated content, newsletters, financial calculators and other functions. This system would be of greatest value to a firm that is looking for a total online solution, from website to client access to employee portals and web-based accounting

solutions. It would also provide strong value to smaller practices just looking

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