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From the August 2005 Review of [Engagement & Trial Balance Software](#)

The interesting thing about reviewing this program is that the more I learned about it, the more respect I gained for how comprehensive it was in features and functions while maintaining its simplicity.

Learning Curve – 4 Stars

I found this application to be very intuitive and easy to navigate. The system uses a traditional Windows command menu and icon toolbar. The online help system is comprehensive and includes a listing of over one hundred individual tips on how to use the system more effectively. A helpful and interactive client and engagement setup checklist helps you to navigate through the setup process efficiently. Data entry and report printing dialogue boxes utilize a very simple user interface design.

Import/Export/Integration – 4 Stars

Accountant's Relief provides a general ledger import utility that supports ASCII text and comma-delimited file imports. Predefined import settings are provided for over 15 brand name GL packages, including Peachtree, QuickBooks and BusinessWorks. In addition, Accounting Relief Online provides your clients with an accounting system that can be shared with you online and integrated with Accountant's Relief.

The trial balance and transaction files can be exported to an ASCII or *.CSV (comma separated values) format. In addition, the transaction file can be exported to MAS 90. The system supports creating and exporting tax data files for most of the popular tax preparation software packages, including Lacerte, ProSystem fx Tax and TurboTax.

This program does not have a direct interface with Word, Excel or Adobe, although it does allow for reports and statements to be saved in Adobe format, and financials can be directly saved to Excel. However, this is not a real significant weakness for this

package because you should be able to complete the typical TB engagement within

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tax and other basis are supported. The chart of accounts setup tracks by class, sub-class, lead sheet, tax code and workpaper code. The journal entry dialogue screen allows for complete descriptions, and six specialized transaction journals are provided.

Workpaper Management – 4 Stars

While the overall feature set related to workpaper management is limited relative to some of the more sophisticated WP systems designed for team engagements, Accountant's Relief does offer a simple and easy-to-use workpaper model. Every workpaper is set up within the same dialogue screen and provides for detailed account adjustments, automatic reconciliation with the trial balance and extended documents. Unfortunately, the system does not support the direct indexing/linking to Excel and Word based workpapers. The system does provide lead sheets as well as a complete bank reconciliation utility. Also available is an interface to the vendor's eCabinet utility to manage the organization of electronic files stored on your system.

Financial Reporting – 4.5 Stars

Accountant's Relief offers a very complete and straightforward financial reporting feature set. The Financial Statements Manager utility allows you to quickly and easily set up report-specific formatting parameters, including the following: line-by-line print controls, sub schedules, appearance formatting, print overrides, rounding control and more. The standard financial report set includes balance sheet, income statement, cash flow and retained earnings. In addition, you can create completely customized financial reports.

Additional reporting features include graphs, cash flow disclosures and adjustments, and comprehensive text page formatting and setup (i.e., cover page, table of contents, accountant's report, footnotes and more). A complete analytical review reporting feature includes period-to-period comparisons with variance and industry

comparisons. The actual report printing dialogue box allows you to control nearly

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I am impressed with how complete this application is as well as with its ease of use. I think it is a very viable solution for any firm that wants to streamline the TB and financial statement process. Accountant's Relief costs \$695 for a full license that includes support. One caution is that it does not have the breadth and depth of workpaper management features that are important for an engagement team approach (i.e., check-in/out and practice aid integration like PPC, Miller, etc.). Having said that, I think that Accountant's Relief is an excellent value for the sole practitioner and small to medium-sized firm that is primarily focused on compilations and business tax return TB engagements. Some of the more sophisticated TB engagement programs can easily be overkill for this market, and Accountant's Relief provides an effective alternative.

2005 Overall Rating – 4.5 Stars

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