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*From the April/May 2007 [Review](#)
of Professional Tax Preparation Systems*

Editor's Note: Although these products do not offer income tax preparation, BNA's 706 Preparer and 709 Preparer products were included in this review because of their compliance support for estate and gift taxation.

BNA Software offers a wide range of specialty compliance tools, including its Estate & Gift Tax line, which includes separate preparation systems for each compliance task as well as a combined estate and gift tax planning program. In addition to the tax research and analysis offered by BNA, the company also offers an individual tax planning solution with support for all 50 states, sales and use tax reporting, fixed asset management and a corporate tax analysis system. The BNA 706 Preparer and 709 Preparer systems are offered individually, providing calculations for all states and D.C. The 706 estate tax system costs \$695 for a single-user license, with renewals at \$595. A single-user license for the 709 gift tax program initially costs \$430, with renewals at \$275. Additional networked user licenses are available starting at \$265 for the 706 Preparer and \$80 for the 709 Preparer. Although the two Preparer systems are independent of each other, both share a similar interface and many common features and functions, so both are reviewed in this article.

Learning Curve — 5 Stars

The 706 Preparer and 709 Preparer programs open directly into a screen that shows virtually all return information at a glance for the appropriate taxation event (estate or gift, depending upon program), with resizable and movable panels that display the actual current form; a data-entry form; a diagnostics and data

validation screen at the bottom; and a collapsible menu of associated forms,

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or “forward” and “back” buttons for navigation between data-entry sheets and “previous” and “next” buttons for moving between sections. Line/field-specific Help and IRS instructions are available by right-clicking or using the F1 key.

Neither system provides a traditional client selection or overview screen. Instead, they utilize the standard Windows file folder structure, opening to the Data folder within the program files, which stores each client's return and associated documents as a separate file. The user specifies whatever naming scheme is desired. Unfortunately, this system doesn't provide simplified searching or an overview of client information, but it suffices as a basic list structure. Overall, both the 706 Preparer and 709 Preparer provide an intuitive interface with good assistive features that ease the compliance process.

Use/Workflow & Productivity Tools — 5 Stars

Each of the programs can import prior year data. Both boast calculation and workflow features specific to their compliance tasks, but both have many common tools such as customization options that enable users to tailor templates, return sets, reporting and print options to their needs, as well as flexible formatting for detailed grids. Both display actual government forms and allow posting of comments to any field, and the programs include missing data alerts with linked access to the error, as well as automatic data backup. Both systems include spell checking on all documents, as well as a Return History feature that acts as an audit trail. The programs can be set to automatically check for system and tax table updates.

Features specific to the 706 Preparer include the ability to calculate federal estate tax using Tax Table A (or the Special Rate Schedule for terrorism events), calculation of state estate/inheritance taxes for all states and DC (including “decoupled” states) and the ability to handle prior transfer credits, Schedule

B stocks, interrelated marital/charitable contributions, dividends and interest

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The 709 Preparer supports split gifts with multiple beneficiaries and automatically identifies marital gifts and calculates the total of such gifts. The program also includes built-in support for generation-skipping transfers, charitable gifts, QTIP and annual exclusions. The 709 Preparer can produce donee worksheets, transmittal letters, client correspondence and print all supplemental schedules for disclosures, elections and calculations.

Integration/Import & Export — 4 Stars

BNA offers a stand-alone Estate & Gift Tax Planner, but this system does not integrate with the 706 and 709 Preparer systems, although the Preparer systems do provide linked access to BNA Tax Management EGT Web Portfolios. The 706 Preparer system also integrates with EstateVal and Appraise, which offer securities data valuation. No integration with individual tax preparation systems is available.

Support/Training & Help System — 5 Stars

BNA includes a full printed user guide, and the programs include excellent built-in Help utilities and other assistive features, including instant access (right-click or F1 key) to line-specific instructions and guidance. The programs also offer the full online versions of IRS Publications 448, 561, 950 and 3920. Additionally, the diagnostics panel provides linked alerts to missing or potentially erroneous data. An online support center includes FAQs, analysis of tax code and law, program updates and options for enrolling in live or online training (available for 709 only). Toll-free phone support is included in the pricing.

Relative Value — 5 Stars

Many tax and accounting professionals refer estate and even gift tax returns to legal firms because of an unfamiliarity with 706 and 709 preparation, a desire

to avoid the sometimes complicated and tedious compliance issues involved with

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