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From the October 2005 [Review of Mid-Range Accounting Software](#)

ProSystem *fx Practice* 2005, Version 6.2, provides extensive practice management tools that integrate with the ProSystem *fx Office* suite. Practice 2005 offers time tracking, contact management, billing, project management and custom reporting. This product's best fit is for mid-size to large firms.

Ease of Use/Flexibility — 5 Stars

CCH has applied simplicity to every aspect of this software package. ProSystem *fx Practice* 2005 is task driven, with an approach that ensures that no time is lost looking for or entering information. The Time Entry interface allows for fast entry of new time, reports all the currently entered time, and includes a day planner that allows for simultaneous recording of project tasks and billable time. For firms where users regularly enter time under the wrong persona or date, CCH includes two buttons within the main toolbar for moving entries as appropriate.

Many firms are finding themselves in need of customer relationship management, and the Clients section of ProSystem *fx Practice* provides much of the necessary tools to do just that. Billing and Memos will likely be two of the most regularly accessed portions of Client properties, allowing staff to select billing options such as automatic billing, invoice formats and determination of finance charges. As well, the Memos portion will enable users to construct notes of recent e-mails, faxes and phone calls. The client properties can also be used to link into the Tax module. The software is updated in real-time and

allows for unlimited clients, staff and engagements. As some firms provide multiple

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flier” best describes staff members should look into the options available for remote connectivity across the Internet (Citrix not necessary) or hosted Global Time Entry. Remote entry options are separately licensed and may have monthly fees.

Productivity Tools/Features — 4.5 Stars

With all of the options available for tracking projects and managing time, firm management should expect to gain a better control over staff scheduling and responsibilities through task assignments. By tracking and billing at the task level, clients will gain detailed bills. Provided that staff members maintain memos, client correspondence will be more useful, and embarrassing situations of requesting information multiple times can be avoided.

Because document management is part of another module, ProSystem *fx* Practice does not offer the capability to attach documents directly to projects, nor does it provide direct means for tracking online research. The billing section breaks the process down to ensure management is aware of the status of bills. Billing entries shows a summary of all billing entries from which invoices can be quickly created. Bills belonging to a particular timekeeper appear in a section called “My Bills” and can be sorted into categories such as unsubmitted, submitted and reviewed. This approach is also adapted for Projects, for which unique views of projects can be created and, if desired, shared with other users.

Reporting — 4 Stars

Several reports are provided with the standard installation, and an editor is provided for sorting, subtotaling and formatting each of these. Crystal Reports can be used to generate custom reports. A specific section of Management Reports provides budget breakdowns by employee and project/task and also provides an employee time analysis. “Printable” reports have not been stressed

as much as having information readily available in preparation and entry screens,

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and updates. Accessing the Help menu also provides links for EfxNews, ProSystem *fx* on the Web, and an e-*fx* Update system. Version 7 should be released by the time this issue goes to press with new integration features and licensing options.

Integration — 5 Stars

Outlook integration is provided for Clients and Contacts, though scheduling is only available within ProSystem *fx* Practice. The majority of integrated toolsets are with other members of the ProSystem *fx* suite, which includes Tax, Document and Engagement. Mobile users have the option of using Palm-enabled devices to enter time while away from the office and synchronize time upon their return.

Relative Value

A five-user license of ProSystem *fx* Practice costs \$1,785; additional users are \$115 each. The five-user Practice/Project Management Bundle costs \$2,325; additional users are \$160 each. The Advantage Database will also cost an additional \$50 per user and is required for all Practice users. Add-ons include the following: Remote Time Entry (\$235 for up to five users; additional users \$25 each); ASCII Import (\$375); Internet Connect (\$105 per user or \$1,050 for unlimited users); PDA Time Entry (\$80 per user); Report Pack (\$300); and Global Time Entry (downloadable from the TaxGroup.CCH.com web site with no up-front licensing; \$225 setup fee when initially executed and \$7.25 access fee per user in months the program is accessed). Discounts may be applicable.

Firms with multiple offices or more than 20 timekeepers will likely find the greatest value. Smaller firms experiencing growing pains may benefit from the additional management and productivity tools, especially if combined with other

tools from the ProSystem *fx* product line. Any firm with need of billing,

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