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2006 Review of Website Tools for Accountants

Drake Software (www.drakesoftware.com), maker of one of the most popular professional tax preparation systems, offers all of its users free websites through the company's www.1040.com portal, which offers general tax information for public visitors. Websites created by tax and accounting professionals are hosted for free as subdomains of the website, so a firm would likely have the web address www.1040.com/FirmName.

Firms that already own their own domain name can also utilize the free website service.

The actual tools to create a website are accessed online through the Drake support center, which provides a template page that essentially shows that page as it will appear online, but also includes little tags that read "Click to Edit" for many of the components of the webpage. In addition to being able to add a personalized company logo along with up to three other images, the system provides customizable vertical and horizontal navigation menus. Nearly 100 stock business images and logos are included and can be used on the site.

Designed for accounting and tax firms, the websites created through the system include general tax information such as filing requirements, standard and itemized deductions, exemptions, as well as a tax calendar, tax estimator, federal and state tax forms, and a list of filing addresses, as well as a list of related links that include the IRS, the AICPA, SSA and several other organizations. All of this information is automatically updated by Drake at no cost. Websites can also offer a return status checker for clients or other website visitors who have filed online, and the system enables firms to gain revenue by providing do-it-yourself online tax preparation to website visitors who use an online

version of Drake's software. There is no review or other involvement on

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tax package.

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