Accounting Software

Offering a zero-administration and zero-setup solution, Intacct's ERP On Demand is a completely browser-based package of accounting modules accessible through a simple Internet login. Intacct has weathered the rise and fall of a number of other web-based accounting packages, to be one of the few that offers a library of features that competes with other desktop applications. ERP On Demand is available for a monthly usage-based subscription fee. Customers pay only for the number of users and specific modules they need. This model allows the company to competitively service everything from very small single-user needs to the large enterprise-level multi-location businesses with up to 1,000 employees.

Brian Hassett, Accounting Manager for DHI, Inc. (www.dhi.us), has used Intacct for about one year. Its primary business is conduction water hydraulic engineering for various clients, which include city and federal governments.
The company employs 30 people and has locations in Oregon, California, Idaho, Pennsylvania and Florida as well as one office in Canada.

Hassett says the most beneficial aspect of Intacct is the ability to access the data from the Internet. He also appreciates the ability to set up timesheets and expense reports to have various approval levels. On the other hand, he notes that his company does not own the software, making customization difficult and expensive.

Data is real time, which Hassett sees as both a positive and a negative. For example, he says: "If I post an AP bill, the expense shows up in the GL account. However, if the bill is deleted in a different time period, then that

change affects the time period the bill was entered. Also, creating invoices

the vendor offers a LiveHelp link, Hassett has found the response time with LiveHelp to be about 15 to 20 minutes.

(The company noted that as part of a planned application upgrade to be launched on Saturday, October 29, Intacct will introduce a Reclassification feature, which makes it possible for users with special permission to edit any invoice, even if it's been paid. This feature will instantly be available for free to all users. Because ERP On Demand is a single software instance, its monthly upgrades are immediately available to the entire customer base in real time.)

Modules Available/Scalability – 5 Stars
ERP On Demand is available in a number of different "solution suites," aimed at different user markets and company sales channels. Among them are the Multi-Entity Edition, Enterprise Edition, ISV (Independent Software Vendors) Edition, and Outsourcer Edition. While the underlying application platform is the same, these editions are built to fit different needs. The Multi-Entity Edition incorporates features for multi-unit management applications to run distributed enterprises, such as restaurant franchises, retail chains and global corporations.

The Enterprise Edition provides applications delivered as services for small and midsize businesses to customize workflow and manage business operations anywhere, anytime. The ISV Edition is targeted at system developers and integrators who provide their clients with customized solutions by fusing back-end and front-end
functionality. The Outsourcer Edition offers accountants and other business services outsourcers the ability to offer Intacct's application platform to their clients, with no need to leave the office, maintain on-premise hardware and software, or hire and train client-site staff.

Intacct offers the following modules: GL, AP, AR, employee expenses, cash

Entry is recommended, the system can be used on a dial-up modem connection as well.

Ease of Use/Transaction Entry – 4 Stars
After signing in, a homepage provides access to the "Accounting Console," which is simply a page with links to all licensed applications, resources, company message board, new features, main shortcuts, report shortcuts and an application drop-down pick list. Each application (module) has its own series of pictographic workflow screens that are hyperlinked to various input screens and reports. Alternatively, there are drop-down list boxes across the top of the screen that provide quick access to all module activities, lists and reports. An important feature is the customizability of the user interface. You can define exactly which modules will be visible for each user. For example, a remote salesperson can be configured to see only the order entry module, which greatly simplifies the amount of information presented to that particular user.

Transactions are entered into HTML-based data-entry forms. Fields that have lookups are denoted by hyperlinks, such as Pick or New beside the data-entry field. Clicking on one of these links opens a separate window with either a picklist of existing items from the database or a data-entry screen that lets you add items on the fly to the applicable database. Quite a number of the key fields also provide easy-to-use drop-down lists that present a list of choices without the need for opening a separate window. Another powerful feature of this program is the ability to attach files of nearly any kind to the transaction itself. For instance, a salesperson could attach a scanned image or other design document to the sales invoice he is entering, which could in turn be accessed and printed by order fulfillment personnel in the main office.

Customization/Security – 4 Stars
Many customizations are available throughout different areas of the program.

Some features can be customized on a global basis while others can be set by

level only requires that the user enter a password of at least six characters. At the next level, users can be required to change their passwords on a periodic basis, such as weekly, monthly, quarterly or yearly. Security can be further increased by requiring complex passwords that contain a mix of uppercase, lowercase and special characters.

Integration/Import/Export – 3 Stars
For initial company setup, data can be imported/converted from QuickBooks. Other data, such as journal entries, can be imported directly into the system from *.CSV or *.XML files. The application offers integration with ADP payroll services, allowing you to import journal entries from files supplied by ADP. Select items, such as financial reports, can also be exported to *.CSV files. The company is continuing to expand this capability.

Intacct also supports an open interface that enables developers of third-party applications to link with its accounting functionality. Using the "Intacct XML Gateway," companies can create customized data exchanges for things like bank information, sales transactions and payroll information.

Reporting – 4 Stars
All modules provide a good library of reports that can be created in a number of different formats. For instant, online viewing, the report can be presented as either an HTML page or a text file. You can also download the report in *.CSV, *.PDF or *.XLS format. Reports can be customized by selecting many different filter and layout options. For example, you can modify the report title, groups, reporting periods, detail level, columns and report formatting characteristics. Many of the reports throughout the system provide drill-down capabilities; amounts

displayed on the reports as hyperlinks allow you to retrieve the underlying

chat-based support system that puts you in direct contact with an Intacct support representative right from the desktop. LiveHelp is available seven days a week during standard business hours.

User guides and tutorials are also available from the application homepage. The tutorial section contains material on well over 200 topics, organized by module. Online Training is also available from the company.

Relative Value – 4 Stars
ERP On Demand demonstrates high-tech web-based software service delivery. For companies that have distributed operations or want a zero-administration accounting
application, Intacct offers an attractive alternative. Many of the limitations and aggravations of browser-based applications from days gone by have been greatly minimized through Intacct's professional design and implementation. While the monthly subscription fees may initially seem costly, firms should consider the high costs that may be associated with maintaining in-house servers, backup practices, qualified IT staff, software updates and security measures.

2005 Overall Rating – 4 Stars

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