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Review of W-2/1099 Software — 2005

That's *Mister* Stand-Alone if You Please!

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From the October 2005 Issue

With all the discussion these days of the power of integrated accounting products, one has to really look up and pay notice to what is certainly a full fleet of available products — ready, willing and capable of annual processing of Form W-2 and information returns. Competition is intense. And without a doubt, that intensity has bred an environment — raised the bar — leading the savvy purveyors of these fine products to offer many (and in some cases every) annual reporting forms, including W-2, 1099, 1098, 5498, and 1042 for foreign persons.

All of this is provided in an environment where the standard for government filing is electronic, but where many smaller companies and practitioners still demand software routines that support paper filing. Wait a moment ... not every user has a new HP LaserJet or computers running Windows/XP with Service Pack 2. That's no problem here as support for dot matrix printers and Windows 95 was easily located.

Okay, now I know these companies talk a good game when it comes to importing data from other accounting packages, ASCII text files and spreadsheets. But is all that buzz really true? Well, I am here to tell you that for many of the purveyors reviewed here, importing capabilities and routines have been raised to the form of science and art.

So to whom does a stand-alone package appeal? Actually, the truth is that a lot more practitioners and companies are attracted to them than you would think. Why? For many good reasons. Software companies, whether they sell write-up or a low- to high-end integrated accounting package, don't support the wealth of forms that are offered in the software reviewed here. Nor do our integrated packages support automatic file checking for errors in those soon-to-be-uploaded electronic files. Oh woe is he/she who has files rejected by IRS Martinsburg; oh how we dread those returned submissions (files or diskettes) containing W-2 forms sent to SSA.

Personally, I mark my calendar at the end of January ... to do everything later. Sure, we have some "straggler" clients who don't follow (or heed) the "generally, should be filed by January 31" mantra. But to be honest, it's more than that. You see, I can't exactly remember which web site I have to file which file with, don't know where my PIN code or passwords are from last year, don't recall which box has copies of last year's filings or manuals, and can't remember when my PIN codes expire. I do know that since I am filing all documents electronically, I have some extra time in which to file — end of March or first week of April. Heck, it's all just a little overwhelming.

For many practitioners and companies, these "stand-alone, non-integrated" programs that produce annual information compliance software are a true godsend. It's a marriage made beyond heaven. You see, many accountants are using "orphaned" software. Just what is "orphaned software?"

Quite simply, it is software that is no longer supported by the company that produced it (for any number of reasons) or it is software that is supported but for which the user has made the decision to forego updates. The oft-heard euphemism is this: If it ain't broke, don't fix it. Yet with no support within these native programs for annual information reports, these programs

are indeed broken. Broken, that is, were it not for the contingent of stand-alone products that are faithfully made available to our would-be orphaned users.

Thus, we come full circle. The W-2/1099 programs reviewed here serve many masters, needs and purposes. Let's take a look, shall we? As stated, readers will be impressed by the sheer power of many of the reviewed programs.

I know I certainly was.

1099 Express — 1099 Express

& W-2 Express

1099 Express offers two programs: 1099 Express and W-2 Express. 1099 Express supports preparation of all Form(s) 1099, 1098 and 5498-IRA, as well as combined Federal/State filing.

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1099 Pro — 1099 Pro & W2

Pro

1099 Pro and W2 Pro are separate programs offered by 1099 Pro, Inc. The 1099 program, also available in an Enterprise edition, handles all 1099, 1098, 5498 and W-2G series forms including MagMedia/Electronic filing, 1096 transmittals and Corrections,...

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AccountantsWorld — After-The-Fact

Payroll 2005

After-the-Fact Payroll (AFP) from AccountantsWorld provides users with the ability to prepare annual Form(s) W-2 and 1099. AFP is available as a stand-alone program or as part of the Accountants Office Suite of products.

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Advanced Micro Solutions — 1099-Etc

1099-Etc is arranged in modular form and supports quarterly and annual tax and information return compliance. The individual 1099-Etc modules are W-2/1099, Laser Generation, A-T-F Payroll, Forms-Etc, and Magnetic/E-file.

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ATX/Kleinrock — ATX Unlimited

W-2/1099

Unlimited W-2/1099 provides very thorough support for annual wage and information return processing, including all Form(s)

1099, 1098, W-2, and 5498.

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CFS Tax Software — W2/1099 Payroll

System

The W2/1099 Payroll System offers support for electronic, magnetic media and paper print wage and information return preparation for most versions of Form(s) 1099, 1098, W-2, and associated forms.

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EG Systems — The W-2/1099 Filer

The W-2/1099 Filer from EG Systems, Inc. supports all Form(s) W-2 (including W-2C), all 1099s, all 1098s, all 5498s, all 1042s, and includes support for employment tax Form(s) 941, 940, and 943. Forms may be filed electronically, magnetically or in paper form. The W-2/1099 Filer is available in a Basic package that supports printing on preprinted forms.

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Form Magic, Inc. — Tax-Mate

2005

Tax-Mate 2005 is offered in three versions: Tax-Mate Print, Tax-Mate Transmittal, and Tax-Mate Advisor. Tax-Mate Print, the base level product, is designed for businesses that need to produce and distribute a limited number of 1099 and W-2 forms, and submit the data via printed Form(s) 1096 and W3.

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Greatland — WinFiler Plus 2005

WinFiler Plus, the advanced version of WinFiler from Greatland Corporation, provides support for an unlimited number of payers and recipients in preparation of Form(s) W-2, W-2G, W-3, all 1099s, all 1098s, all 5498s, 941, 943, 945 and corrections thereto. Additionally, WinFiler Plus provides support for quarterly employment reports for 44 States.

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IDMS Corporation — Account Ability

Tax Form Preparation

Account Ability includes full, unlimited record support for an unlimited number of filers of Form(s) W-2 and 1099. Supported forms include the following: Form 1099-MISC, 1099-DIV, 1099-INT, 1099-OID, 1099-PATR, 1099-A, 1099-B, 1099-C, 1099-G, 1099-LTC, 1099-Q, 1099-R, 1099-S, 1099-SA, 1098, 1098-E, 1098-T, 5498, 5498-ESA, 5498-SA, W-2, W-2C, and W-2G.

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Spokane — MAG-FILER 1099/W2

MAG-FILER supports annual wage and information return processing for Form(s) W-2, W-3, W-2G, all Form(s) 1099, 1042-S, 1098, 1098-E, 1098-T, 5498, 5498-ESA and 5498-SA. It supports electronic and magnetic media filing and print filing capabilities. Spokane also offers a service bureau that can perform all or any part of the filing process, including data entry.

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W-2/1099 Software — Executive

Summary

Practitioners, companies of all sizes, schools, banks and other users are indeed fortunate to have such a wealth of strong software vendors from which to choose. As we have seen, not all programs support every form or sub-type.

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