the August 2007 Review of Document Storage Systems

ArkWorks was initially released in January 2006, making it one of the newest products in this review. It is designed primarily to work with the TaxWorks tax preparation software, but can also be used as a stand-alone document storage system.

Usability — 5 Stars

The ArkWorks interface is designed as a series of window panes. On the left side of the screen, the selected drawer is listed (i.e., 1040-Individual). Below the drawer is a list of search values (i.e., clients). On the right-hand side of the display, a window pane reveals the folder structure for the currently selected drawer. To the right is a window that displays the currently selected document, and the bottom window pane displays a list of the documents that meet the user's search criteria. The end result of all these window panes is that you can navigate the entire database of documents through the hierarchy all from one screen, including viewing the selected document.

Document Organization — 5 Stars

The document organization model begins with a cabinet that typically contains a group of clients, customers, employees, etc. Each cabinet is made up of a series of drawers for each record in the cabinet (i.e., specific clients). Each client drawer includes a series of folders (i.e., Permanent, YYYY). The folder structure can be uniquely defined for each client. Additional cabinets can be established with pre-defined drawer and folder templates.

Annotation — 5 Stars

The system supports both proprietary annotations and Adobe Acrobat annotations. The proprietary annotations include redactions, whiteout, highlighting, comments

and text entry tools. These proprietary annotations actually convert to Adobe

form of a move or a copy. Integration with Outlook allows users to drag and drop e-mails directly into ArkWorks in native format. A print driver allows forms to be printed from any Windows application directly into ArkWorks.

Records Management — 5 Stars
Security features include functionality to control documents that are distributed via e-mail. Users can control the recipient's ability to access, modify or extract the document and limit the ability to print annotations. Document retention features include the ability to establish a document maturity date, which facilitates generating a hit list of expired documents that can be purged individually or as a batch. These expired documents can also be burned to a CD for permanent off-line storage. A built-in recycle bin allows users to recover deleted files or delete them permanently. The document properties feature maintains an audit trail of all activity to monitor who did what to the document and when, including viewing, printing, e-mailing and deleting the document.

Relative Value — 4.5 Stars
ArkWorks offers a pretty comprehensive set of features for the small office, with an intuitive design at an attractive price point. Pricing starts at $995 for a five-user license with an annual renewal fee of $395. Toll-free technical support is included at no additional charge. Training is provided through a demonstration CD and web-based demonstrations.

2007 Overall Rating: 5 Stars

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