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practice management systems and such. The gist of the announcement is that they've partnered with Advanced Professional Solutions (APS), which apparently has had a strong user base in the UK (20% of top 100 firms), New Zealand (60%) and Australia (70%) for nearly 20 years.

CLI is going to be the U.S. distributor of that company's suite of practice management, business intelligence, CRM, document management and business process automation software, having helped them adjust the programs appropriately to U.S. compliance requirements, accounting principles, workflow processes and terminology.

What I find interesting is that there are two other important parts of the APS suite that aren't yet included for the U.S. market through CLI: Professional Tax Compliance and Professional Accounting (aka write-up). CLI hasn't addressed this issue yet (and I haven't asked them yet- but I will).

If they do have plans to roll out either or both programs, it would be an interesting event, especially for the professional tax compliance market. The past 10 years or so has seen mostly consolidation in this area:

Intuit acquired Lacerte;
Creative Solutions bought Accountants World's Tax Relief;
Thomson went on a shopping spree, acquiring Creative Solutions, PPC, RIA and Reuters;
CCH took over TaxWise and ATX;
Red Gear, an H&R Block subsidiary bought TaxWorks;
CCH acquired Orrtax's Intellitax
... am I missing anything?

The result is that there are basically three companies controlling more than 80% of

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Orange Door, TaxVision, Greatland (which resells the TaxWorks package) and a few minor names. About a decade ago there were more than two dozen notable names in the tax compliance game. I guess consolidation is just a sign of a maturing market.

With the exception of Orange Door, which debuted in 2007 as a totally web-based system, there really hasn't been a new program on the market for more than a decade. So the introduction of the tax compliance system from APS, if CLI is going to start distributing the program here, would be a considerable event.

Once again, though - It's not clear whether they will. As soon as I can talk to him, I'll let you know what CLI's president Peter Coburn has to say about it.

www.aps-advance.com

www.cli-usa.com

Also - While you're thinking about tax compliance programs, check out my April review of tax compliance systems.

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