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& [Accounting Research Systems](#).*

As tax and accounting professionals have become more and more confident and comfortable with both utilizing resources and providing services over the Internet, they have begun to unlock the wealth of benefits therein. The rising interest in SaaS and cloud computing is just one piece of evidence supporting this shift.

Finding information online is nothing new ... and there is no shortage of information to be found. However, the task of weeding through what is actually relevant and accurate can pose quite a challenge. While the paid research services reviewed in this section are the best bet for complete, reliable and credible information, practitioners with smaller or less complex client bases will likely find value in the variety of free research/information and community-based sites offered by several of the vendors serving the tax and accounting space.

Obviously, these free sites aren't able to provide the same breadth of information, analysis and expert opinion as the paid subscription systems, but they do have a place of value for those who are looking for the specific information that can be found in each. One aspect many professionals find particularly noteworthy is the ability to interact and exchange ideas and questions with their peers, and more and more vendors are opening the doors to community-based forums for just this reason. Read more about the many online communities and professional networks available to tax and accounting professionals at www.CPATechAdvisor.com/go/2608.

And here are just a few of the free tax information and research sites available:

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we and our linked-in site user submitted pages, comments, questions and answers, as well as chats. Additionally, TaxAlmanac.org includes links to forms on the IRS website.

Although not required, users are encouraged to outline their background and qualifications on their personal user page, which is linked to from every edit and discussion from posting. A complete history of all edits, with the editors' names and date/time of each edit, can be viewed by selecting the History tab on every page on the site. The site disclaimer informs the visitor that the website is provided free of charge, that Intuit is not responsible for the content and does not endorse it, and that the content is not to be considered as tax or legal advice. The missing piece for the tax professional in this case is the editorial content provided by the trusted brand names in tax research. Does caveat emptor apply when there is no buyer?

Drake Software — 1040.com

As tax professionals, you know that the tax laws are constantly changing and will affect various aspects of your clients' taxing situations. Understanding those changes is what sets you apart ... and is the reason your clients continue to request your expert services. The 1040.com website serves dual purposes. While its content is primarily aimed at self-preparers, it also provides basic answers to tax questions with forms, worksheets, publications, tools and links to more in-depth information, which can also be of benefit to professional preparers. 1040.com is also Drake Software's hub for its professional websites (provided free to all users of the vendor's tax software).

AccountantsWorld — AccountantsWorld.com

AccountantsWorld is probably best known for its web-based products for tax and accounting professionals, but the vendor has developed quite an online community over the past several years, as well. Professional tax preparers will also find

a great deal of information to assist in tax preparation, from headline news,

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