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Over the past several years, some accounting technologists have come close to announcing the demise of client write-up (or at least the significant decline in its necessity and profitability for professional accountants). Well, as Mark Twain would put it, the reports of the death of client write-up have been greatly exaggerated. In this year's review of professional write-up systems, we look at the capabilities and advantages of several web-based, hosted and locally installed programs.

Write-up continues to be a core service area for many firms, but it is definitely evolving. The nature of the service remains essential to many small businesses — produce financial statements and compilations for use by the business in forecasting

and planning or to report results to company investors and creditors. What has

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result in significant time savings since it created the need for accountants to review transactions individually to ensure correct account postings and journal entries.

In 2011, the concept of data collection and correction has become more automated and easier for both the accountant and the business. Most transaction data files are now electronically transmitted between the client and the firm, often using portals or web-based accounting solutions that directly integrate the client data into the firm's professional accounting system. While this speeds delivery and return of the data, the process itself is still somewhat outdated.

In addition to the on-premises installed programs that have been around for years, SaaS and hosted professional write-up systems are now available and enable better client interaction, with either batch-based synchronization or online simultaneous data access. With web-based and integrated client accounting tools, firms can now have full access to live client data 24/7. The accountant can work with the general ledger and journals, reclassify transactions, and perform bank reconciliations and other tasks, without scheduling a time to have exclusive access to the data file. Another advantage to this arrangement is enhanced client collaboration, which allows the accountant to respond instantly to client needs. SaaS systems also include communication tools, portals and document sharing options.

The Value Proposition

Some skeptics see a challenge in monetizing this new form of client write-up, especially if they traditionally bill by time or project. However, those who've transitioned to the "value pricing" approach have had success. The key is to stop thinking of write-up as a once-a-month service and instead consider it an ongoing service that is part of a larger client relationship "package" for which a business pays a set recurring fee over the course of a year.

Some professionals may consider it more of a consulting format, but it's still "write-

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ongoing review makes it easier to perform other engagements such as payroll and tax compliance services since the quality of the data is enhanced by this ongoing, monthly work. Client write-up is far from dying; it's just rebranding itself as the client value relationship, and will be part of most successful accounting firms for the foreseeable future.

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