expanded to include many new features over the years, and it is now available in
more than 10 languages and 100 countries.

Brian Tankersley • Jun. 06, 2014

Intuit QuickBooks Online was one of the first online small business financial
management applications when it was launched in 2000. The application has
expanded to include many new features over the years, and it is now available in
more than 10 languages and 100 countries.

Intuit reported there are 624,000 subscribers using QuickBooks online as of April 30,
2014, up from 459,000 at April 30, 2013. While this is impressive, the company
reports it sold over 5.2 million copies of the desktop QuickBooks to users in the 2 ¾
years ended April 30, 2014, and an additional 319,000 companies "subscribed"
(rented) a desktop version of QuickBooks.

While QBO is growing rapidly and has a larger user base than any other small

comma-delimited file. Although the product does not offer built-in charts of accounts for different industries, users can create a company in QuickBooks Pro/Premier on a desktop computer using the desired industry chart of accounts in that company and import the data into QBO.

QuickBooks online supports Internet Explorer (32-bit only), Firefox, Chrome, and Safari browsers for Windows, and supports Firefox and Safari on Mac OS X. There is an app for Apple iOS devices, and a QBO app is available for the Google Chrome Web Browser. We experienced some minor issues with the 64-bit version of Internet Explorer 11 in Windows 8.1 during our review, but a careful reading of the browser support indicates that the product is not supported on 64-bit IE.

Core Accounting Capabilities: 5 Stars

The product has a strong general ledger, and features good tools for managing accounts receivable and accounts payable, including the ability to send invoices via e-mail from within the product. QuickBooks Online supports U.S. sales tax, and versions designed for other countries support alternate tax regimes like a value-added tax (VAT). There is not a native payroll calculation engine built into the product, but Intuit Online Payroll offers direct integration into the QBO general ledger.

QBO has a tool called "Activity Log" which shows logins, changes to standing data as well as any changes to transactions. Results can be filtered based on criteria selected by the user.

The global version is translated into 45 different languages using Google Translate. Although the U.S. version does not support multiple currencies, the global version of QBO supports multiple currencies.

QBO does not natively support multi-company reporting, and permits access by up

sets of the two applications, the new user interface makes the two user interfaces much more consistent, and simplifies the task of working in both solutions.

Intuit Apps (apps.intuit.com) is a marketplace for third party QBO applications, and it provides a secure data exchange platform on Intuit's servers. The number of available third party applications for QBO is significantly fewer than are available for the desktop product, but there are well-respected applications available to meet most major business management needs, including shipping, online sales, point of sale, and customer relationship management.

QBO natively supports FIFO inventory (required QuickBooks Online Plus) for merchandisers and distributors. Users who need more sophisticated functions, including assemblies and manufacturing should evaluate a third-party solution like SOS Inventory.

Online payments from customers are supported through the Intuit Payment Network or can be paid via credit card using Intuit Merchant Services. eBay sales activity can be imported using the Intuit QuickBooks Connect app in the eBay Apps Center or using other third party software. Third party tools for eMarketing and CRM are available from a number of third party providers.

Management Features: 5 Stars

Benchmarking against other companies in the company's peer group is available through the "Scorecard" report. QBO also has a wide range of reporting capabilities, including memorizing customizations to standard reports and support for third party reporting tool integrations.

QBO's settings permit users to have access with different access levels (Admin, time tracking only, or reporting only), and a fourth type (a "standard" user) can have either full access or limited access to vendors and payables transactions. These

controls are similar to other SaaS accounting packages, but do not offer the very

QBO from any of the available Intuit Marketplace applications, and can also use generic tools like Transaction Pro Importer to bring in transactions from text or Microsoft Excel files. Data can also be exported to a file compatible with the desktop version of QuickBooks, within certain limitations.

QBO users can select from a number of CRM and marketing system integrations, including SalesForce.com, MavenLink CRM, Microsoft Dynamics CRM, and Direct Mail Manager.

Accountants can use some of the tools in the QuickBooks Accountant edition Client Data Review for QuickBooks Desktop in a free application called QuickBooks Online for Accountants (QBO4A). This app simplifies the process of cleaning up multiple postings in client data, and should be investigated by any accounting professional (internal or external) who uses QBO.

Help and Support

Unlimited support is available via e-mail, message boards, Facebook, Twitter (@QBOnline), or via telephone (1-800-488-7330, M-F 6A-6P PT, Sat. 6A-3P PT).

Intuit also hosts a support knowledgebase, including frequently asked questions and technical reference articles, which is accessible from the "Help" menu within the product.

Summary and Pricing: 5 Stars

Pricing:

- QuickBooks Online Simple Start: $12.95/mo (one user)
- QuickBooks Online Essentials: $26.95 (up to three users)
- QuickBooks Online Plus: $39.95 **(up to five users)**

- Import from QuickBooks desktop software data file feature is attractive for those converting from the desktop version of the application.
- Scorecard benchmarking tool can anonymously benchmark company performance against peers in the same industry.

Potential Limitations

- Although the feature set is impressive for a SaaS application, QBO has a more limited feature set than the mature, on-premises product, which includes advanced features not available in QBO like job costing, combined financial statements, and multiple currencies.
- The simplicity of the security model makes it difficult to restrict the tasks that active users can perform inside the company file.
- Even though the product is called "QuickBooks Online," the application has significant differences in function and approach which may make its use confusing to those who have to work with both versions of the application.

Best Firm Fit

- Service-based companies who need something more robust than a micro-business solution, yet do not require the full feature sets present in entry level solutions like Sage 50 US and QuickBooks Pro/Premier.
- Small business owners who need an online accounting solution supported by many accounting professionals which integrates with many third party add-on solutions.
- The entry level QuickBooks Online Simple Start is a possible alternative for users considering micro-business solutions for invoicing customers, managing cash, and tracking receivables.

2014 Overall Rating: 5 Stars

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us