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## "Software Review: ImagineTime 5.31"

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While many of the current T&B applications were actually designed for law practices, and adapted for use in an accounting or consulting practice, ImagineTime was designed from the bottom up by CPAs for other accountants, financial planners and consultants. The difference is subtle, but it's there if you look for it in the terminology and layout, which follow the way T&B is often handled in an accounting practice. The software was initially developed and marketed by Both Worlds Software, but ImagineTime was split off from the parent company last year, relocated from Florida to North Carolina, and renamed after its premier software product. Much of the staff and management relocated, so there is plenty of continuity in support and development.

ImagineTime eschews the flowchart-like navigation that's becoming the norm in accounting-oriented applications in favor of a simple comprehensive menu that groups tasks into four areas - data entry, reports that are run on a daily or monthly basis, reports that are management-oriented, and utilities. It isn't as glitzy as some of the applications we looked at, but it sure is easy to use and navigate through. This ease of use is evident everywhere in the application.

The pricing structure of ImagineTime allows you essentially to build your own application, paying for only those features that you want and will use. The basic application is priced from \$295 for the single-user version, and includes remote data entry functionality in this version. This capability is priced separately in the multi-user edition.

By itself, the single-user package provides an excellent T&B system with fast data entry and a nice collection of very readable and usable reports. The included report generator lets you define the data fields to be used in the report and makes it easy to get only the particular data you are looking for. These reports can be exported into Word or Excel, which makes it easy to create custom reports and perform additional analysis, if needed.

In addition to the base system, ImagineTime offers three add-ons that are very much worth adding if you can use them. The first is an excellent due date monitor, which is a must in many accountable practices. Setting up tax due dates is a breeze, as is entering other client due dates. The due date monitor is available for \$195, and is worth looking at even if you already use another vendor's T&B or practice management system. After all, you never want to have to explain to a client why you overlooked one of their due dates.

Another terrific add-on is the contact calendar and Outlook sync. If you currently use Outlook for your e-mail and contacts, this add-on gives you many of the features of a full-blown contact relationship manager application.

Finally, the Palm Pilot Integration, a \$125 (for first user) add-on, lets you record time and expense data on a Palm-based PDA.

As with several other vendors, ImagineTime provides a free demo for download on its Web site. It's very much worth downloading if you are in the market for a T&B system.