



## **THE CPA TECHNOLOGY ADVISOR**

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### **Acct1st Technology Group LLC — Acct1st EDRMS**

Staff Writers

#### **From the June/July 2007 Review of Document Management Systems**

Acct1st is developed with the combined efforts of a Dallas-based CPA firm and a Seattle-based software development organization. It is very much an “accountant-centric” application and offers the best of both worlds in terms of allowing the choice between deploying it on your internal server or using the vendor’s secure web hosting service.

#### **Usability -- 5 Stars**

The interface is quite intuitive, and the appearance can be customized by individual users. When searching for a document or file, a magnifying glass tool leads you to a search form that is customizable by the individual user. A Google-style search functionality is provided, and the resulting document hit list can be completely customized by the user, including hiding or displaying selected columns.

Queries can be saved for reuse. An option to display the document organization in a Windows folder view format is available for those who prefer that model. From the document hit list, a multitude of functions can be performed, such as exporting, e-mailing, printing or publishing files to a portal; viewing document history; reviewing document retention policy; and more.

The viewer function relies on opening the native application (i.e., MS-Word, Excel, etc). A document revision history allows a user to track and view the complete history of a document’s evolution. Annotation is handled within the native applications.

#### **Integration -- 5 Stars**

Acct1st offers direct integration with all of the major tax preparation software packages, and direct integration with CaseWare’s automated workpapers application is also provided. A special print driver allows for publishing any application-generated document or report to Acct1st. IQ is a universal export/import tool that allows for the automate transfer of data between Acct1st and other applications. In addition, Acct1st has established a working relationship with Sage Software to integrate with the MAS software product line.

#### **Records Management -- 5 Stars**

The document retention module allows you to define the document retention levels at a very granular level based upon the associated metadata. Document security is established at the document type level, and access rights are assigned at the individual or group level.

### Scanning -- 4 Stars

The system supports batch scanning with the ability to use barcode cover sheets to separate the document organization feature from the scanning feature. Acct1st has entered into a licensing agreement to include one of the tax and accounting profession's leading document scanning applications (not identified) as a privately labeled solution. Acct1st will work with any of the industry-standard scanning capture documents.

### Workflow Automation -- 4 Stars

The Workflow 2.0 module allows users to associate related files by client/engagement and move them through the process as a binder. The system includes a feature to spawn the creation of a series of required documents based upon the nature of a client/engagement type that is set up in the firm's practice management application.

### Portal -- 5 Stars

Acct1st's portal capability can serve as a two-way document/file exchange tool with clients. The folder organization model can be customized for each client's portal site. A handy administration tool allows users to preview the client's portal during configuration. As well, documents can be "broadcast" to all client portal sites, such as the firm's newsletter. Documents can also be published in a batch mode for a client's portal site based on the document type (i.e., all tax-related documents).

### Pricing/Value -- 5 Stars

Acct1st offers a very simple and affordable pricing model. The fully hosted option is priced at \$365 per user, per year — in other words, one dollar per user per day. This includes unlimited data storage, network infrastructure and management, software upgrades, ongoing training and technical support. The tax scanning and workflow modules are priced separately. The in-house solution is priced at \$365 per user with an 18 percent annual maintenance fee. Seventy percent of the customers have opted for the hosted solution. Acct1st's services are offered at \$1,500 total for remote install, training, configuration and consulting. Implementation consulting and training is provided on-site at a cost of \$1,500 per day.

### Summary

Acct1st offers a very compelling solution in terms of depth and breadth of functionality. The fact that you can choose between an in-house solution and a web-hosted application uniquely positions the system to meet the needs of a diverse customer base.

## 2007 Overall Rating: 5 Stars



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