



Virtual Office CS:
**ANYTIME,
ANYWHERE,
NO MATTER
WHAT**

Sonya L. Laney, P.A.
Daytona Beach Shores, Florida



Solutions

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COVER: As a sole practitioner, Sonya Laney benefits from the 24/7 access and data backup that Virtual Office CS provides. (Photos by David Wolff.)

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Powerful New Benchmarking Data Exchange Promises to Transform Client Service

Thompson Creative Solutions is continuously looking for new ways to help our customers improve efficiency and increase profits. From software integration to quality customer service and beyond, we want your firm—and your clients' businesses—to succeed.

One of our current goals is to help our customers leverage client information within the broader accounting community in order to enhance services and provide valuable insight to clients. It's with this goal in mind that we've created a powerful new product, the Data Exchange module, which is available exclusively within Financial Analysis CS. The data within this module is unique and comes from trusted sources—your peer accounting firms that also use Financial Analysis CS.

Starting this fall, Financial Analysis CS users will be able to contribute their client data—stripped of any client-specific information—to the Data Exchange module. And you can be assured that all data resides in a secure environment. Users that contribute data will automatically have access to the entire database and will be able to drill down to retrieve specific criteria, such as type of business, sample size, state,

region, number of employees, and custom ranges of assets or sales. The Data Exchange module will enable you to offer your clients valuable financial advice based on customized benchmarks.

The Data Exchange module will initially be offered to Financial Analysis CS users as part of the RMA® license. Data offered within this new module is not

meant to be a replacement to RMA data, but rather, it was created to offer another level of data that can be shared with your clients.

Throughout the year, as data contributions increase, the Data Exchange module will progressively become an even more powerful benchmark-

ing tool. This new module will transform the types of reports and level of service you provide to your clients.

Thomson Creative Solutions is committed to providing you with the necessary tools to remain competitive in an increasingly high-tech world. As always, we hope you think of us as your technology partner, ready and willing to provide assistance and offer solutions that will continue to enhance the client-accountant relationship.

“Starting this fall, Financial Analysis CS users will be able to contribute their client data—stripped of any client-specific information—to the Data Exchange module.”

Jonathan A. Baron

Executive Vice President and General Manager—Professional Software and Services, Thomson Tax and Accounting, and President and CEO—Thomson Creative Solutions

“Best part of Practice CS is the Client Dashboard”

Practice CS has helped me increase my billings. Earlier, I was losing a lot of billable time without knowing it. The best part of Practice CS is the client dashboard, because it allows me to see important information, such as status on projects, WIP, A/R balance, billing history, client emails, all in one screen. It saves me time. Now, when I either talk to a client or start working on an account, I turn my timer on and I capture every minute I spend on that client. I am also using the Project Management module. Since the tax program updates the Project Management module, it makes it easier to track the status of each tax return. My practice is now running more efficiently and with easier access to client information. —*Vanessa A. Cisneros, CPA, Sole Practitioner, Miami, Florida*

“Staff dashboards increase staff efficiency”

Every accounting firm is seeking operating efficiencies. Our search took us to the 21st Century of integrated time and billing with the use of Practice CS.



Ronald G. Harris, CPA

Before we began using practice, it was difficult to judge productivity, projected billings, and month end billing took entirely too much time to complete. The dashboards in Practice CS allow us to effectively manage staff, follow up on delinquent client receivables, and plan projected billings in difficult cash management months. The staff dashboards increase efficiency of staff by allowing many

sources of information to be in one place. Staff does not waste time bouncing from program to program, and it allows them to assess their productivity more efficiently. The use of the dashboards within Practice CS is an automatic tool to assist with the many facets of managing an accounting firm.

—*Ronald G. Harris, CPA, Harris Group, CPAs, Traverse City, Michigan*

“Making great money with write-up”

My firm is strictly write-up and QuickBooks® training and support. I do not do tax returns. I am a middle man between clients and their CPAs. I'm making great money with write-up, but I just had to attack it a bit differently. We can't control the accounting to the degree we could before personal computers, so we have to learn different ways to help the client get the best data they can.

After 18 years in business, I found myself stressed beyond belief. The turning point was when I realized that we were not as efficient as we could be, and it was a nightmare if any staff left. The client files were a mess. Too much information was in staff's heads and not written down, and each staff had their own way of keeping records. We in essence closed, re-organized and reopened my practice. We upgraded our equipment. We implemented new policies for filing documents on the server and in the files. We implemented more paperless scanning. My staff and I met as a team and as we went through every client, we typed up detailed instructions and checklists that any staff could follow. We discussed and documented how each client did business, who the payers are, what their weaknesses are, as well as common mistakes they make. We are now cross trained. The checklists are a godsend! We do nothing by hand now.

All phone calls are documented on phone conversation logs and filed. When I get a phone call from a client, I quickly know what is going on. Client work is going out much faster, is more accurate, and staff morale is better.

Half the battle is educating the clients. The more help we offer, the easier our job is in the long run. You know what I hear the most? “Wow, no one ever explained how this works to me before. They just gave me adjusting entries ...” Once they automate, we have to get creative and deal with it. Each client must be dealt with in a different manner.

We use client portals to extend our reach and offer clients the ultimate in convenience. I have clients with board members all over the states and one with owners in Columbia, South America. They love my portals!

For clients who use QuickBooks in-house and retain us to close their books periodically, we keep their G/L up to date and accurate including controlling the “closing date” and password. Clients may then print in-house reports or retain us to import into CS Professional Suite Accounting for proper compilation financial statements.

Other terms that clients must agree to: Online access to their computer, and we transmit year end information to their tax accountant, not the client. We drop their year end reports such as the financials and a fixed assets activity report into Excel, including a T/B, ready to import into their tax program. We also provide a G/L with collapsed grouped accounts such as payroll taxes, A/P, A/R so the G/L isn't so huge if printed. I request that clients retain a competent CPA for their tax returns. I prefer working with CPAs who are technically savvy. The end result is that life is easier and I am bringing in larger and better quality clients. —*Sara Laidlaw, Accounting Services Bureau, Inc., Savannah, Georgia.*

AT A GLANCE

TERRY ROGERS, CPA

Fort Payne, Alabama

Sole Practitioner

Clients:
• 150 +



*Terry Rogers
on location at a
client's grocery store.*

DAVID WOLFF

TAKE IT TO THE BANK

**FINANCIAL ANALYSIS CS GIVES ALABAMA CPA TERRY ROGERS
A LEG UP—AND HIS CLIENTS REAP THE BENEFITS**

Terry Rogers makes a bold statement about the effectiveness of Financial Analysis CS. In the approximately two years the Fort Payne, Alabama, CPA has been using this Creative Solutions software, he has never had a bank loan denied for any of his more than 150 clients in 15 states.

“If I carry a loan package to the bank, it’s going to get approved,” he says. “Financial Analysis CS lets me compare my clients’ performance in their industry to a national group using information provided by the Risk Management Association® (RMA). I can go back over the past five years to examine their internal growth rate, sales, production and employees. That information is invaluable. Bankers don’t have it. Financial Analysis CS gives me a leg up on my competition. And if my client wants to sell his company, this information is of tremendous value to the buyer. It makes a huge difference.”

Rogers started Advanced Accounting Inc. five years ago to

serve individuals with high net worth and their companies. He began with individual tax returns and moved into financial and estate planning, risk management and loan packages. Rogers also serves as chief financial officer of Smith Newspapers Inc., also based in Fort Payne, which owns 10 small weekly newspapers nationwide.

Examine three elements

Financial Analysis CS looks at three elements of a client’s business. There is an internal analysis of the operation that identifies strengths and weaknesses. Then the business is examined against the industry, and is finally compared to its peer group.

“We have newspapers all over the country,” Rogers says, “and the reason we can run them efficiently is because we know how many employees and how much advertising is needed based on our knowledge of other newspapers in the country. Financial Analysis CS does a lot of this work very quick-

ly. Banks are used to getting three pieces of paper when considering a loan, but I provide them with a 50-page report in basically no time at all. It’s very detailed and puts my clients considerably ahead compared to a basic loan presentation.”

Adding even more value with Data Exchange

Another example is a local \$30 million grocery store chain that was considering reorganization and refinancing. To help them, Rogers needed industry information, but more specifically information on similar-sized stores in the Southeast. Creative Solutions recently introduced a new Data Exchange module for Financial Analysis CS software. The module provides industry data based on clients from a trusted source — peer data from accounting firms using Creative Solutions software.

By gathering this client data and providing access to that data via the Data Exchange module, Creative Solutions offers Financial Analysis CS users the ability to truly customize their industry data by drilling down to such criteria as sample size, state, region, number of employees, and custom ranges of assets or sales. This module provides more meaningful data to clients to use as a reliable benchmark to evaluate their financial

Rogers has never had a bank loan denied for any of his more than 150 clients in 15 states while using Financial Analysis CS. “If I carry a loan package to the bank, it’s going to get approved,” he says.



Technology Sets Rogers Apart

“Combining technology and Creative Solutions software gives me another leg up,” Rogers says. “I used their software before I started my business. I was one of the first to use Virtual Office CS and Microsoft Exchange products. My e-mail is on their server. There is such terrific integration of their products. I’ve grown my business 20 percent a year and last year was even bigger.”

A local banker was working on a client’s new loan package and needed copies of last year’s personal and business tax returns. Rogers went to FileCabinet CS and e-mailed them immediately, literally while they were on the phone.

Rogers prepares the payroll for a group in Indianapolis. It’s a direct deposit situation where they fill out remote payroll in a spreadsheet. Rogers imports the data and

processes the payroll without keying in any information using a Creative Solutions accounting program. He puts the final report in FileCabinet CS, where the group accesses it on a secure portal with NetClient CS.

For years, Rogers has been doing a “same-day-close” for 10 newspapers. With Creative Solutions software the owners can see financial information from the previous month on the first day of the month. Rogers starts at 9 a.m. with bank reconciliations, accounts receivables and financial statements. Reports for the previous month are usually completed by mid-afternoon. The work is done in Client Bookkeeping Solution, moved to FileCabinet CS and accessed by the client on NetClient CS.

“I get clients from other accountants because they can’t do some of the things I’m able to do, primarily because of Financial Analysis CS. Anyone can do a tax return, but not everyone can take it to the next level.”

	2008	% Change	Industry	Variance
Assets				
Cash & Equivalents	\$175,910	37.0%	\$123.5	0.0%
Accounts Receivable	\$0	0.0%	\$28	0.0%
Prepaid Accounts	\$177,244	17.1%	\$278	0.0%
Inventory	\$11,907	1.2%	\$278	0.0%
Prepaid Expenses	\$0	0.0%	\$96	0.0%
Other Current Assets	\$0	0.0%	\$278	0.0%
Total Current Assets	\$365,061	40.2%	\$176	0.0%
Long Term Investments	\$17,127	0.1%	\$46	0.0%
Real Estate Assets	\$108,700	31.4%	\$176	0.0%
Intangible Assets	\$29,760	0.1%	\$176	0.0%
Other Non-Current Assets	\$12,472	0.1%	\$176	0.0%
Total Assets	\$533,020	52.3%	\$176	0.0%
Liabilities				
Accounts Payable	\$12,886	0.0%	\$176	0.0%
Notes Payable	\$0	0.0%	\$176	0.0%
Current Liabilities	\$12,886	0.0%	\$46	0.0%
Long Term Debt	\$11,113	0.0%	\$176	0.0%
Other Long Term Liabilities	\$17,127	0.1%	\$176	0.0%
Total Current Liabilities	\$29,999	0.1%	\$176	0.0%
Long Term Debt	\$11,113	0.0%	\$176	0.0%
Deferred Income Taxes	\$12,472	0.1%	\$176	0.0%
Other Long Term Liabilities	\$12,472	0.1%	\$176	0.0%
Total Long Term Liabilities	\$36,057	0.2%	\$176	0.0%
Total Liabilities	\$66,056	0.1%	\$176	0.0%

usually get just a tax return for a loan request. If they’re lucky they get financial statements. But to get a detailed analysis like the one I generated from Financial Analysis CS makes the loan process smooth and quick. Like I said, I’ve never been turned down.”

Taking it to the next level

Rogers does more than simply hand out a 50-page

performance. As client data is progressively collected over the next few years, the Data Exchange module will become increasingly valuable to firms. Creative Solutions will continue to partner with RMA and provide access to the RMA Annual Statement Studies™ industry information from within Financial Analysis CS.

“I already do an internal and industry-wide analysis,” Rogers says, “but adding a group level of peers in the same geographic region is invaluable.”

Financial Analysis CS is a natural progression

Back to the grocery store example: The sons of the owner who were running the business weren’t happy with the way their companies were operating. They were paying too much in taxes and didn’t find out about it until two days before taxes were due.

When Rogers took them on as a client, he started preparing their income tax returns. At the end of the year he made the adjustments and completed the process in about 40 days, half the time it used to take. Then he took on their

financial statements and payroll.

“After doing this for a few months I asked if I could offer some suggestions,” Rogers says. “They had six separate companies, and I advised them to bundle them together so one large company owned six subsidiaries. This allowed them to do one corporate tax return. They were able to offset the losses of one company against the profits of another.”

The next step was to reorganize their corporate structure. Then Rogers helped their father with estate planning and finally moved into risk management. That’s when Financial Analysis CS entered the picture.

“I put together a report and took it to their bank showing how well they were doing,” Rogers says. “They had a loan with a variable rate, and it was time to lock it down with a fixed rate loan. Rather than the prime rate, they got an international rate. We refinanced the loan and cut down the payments by \$10,000 a month. The report was a natural progression and put them much further ahead than they were two years ago, and increased their profitability considerably. The bank was overwhelmed. They

Financial Analysis CS report to a client or banker because they might not be able to interpret all of it correctly.

“It’s important to sit down with them and tell them what it means,” he says. “It’s more than the basic financial data you’d get from most accountants. It’s much deeper than that. I don’t stop at just their tax returns. I get clients from other accountants because they can’t do some of the things I’m able to do, primarily because of Financial Analysis CS. Anyone can do a tax return, but not everyone can take it to the next level. That’s why I get as many referrals as I do.

“The more services I can offer a client, the less likely they are to go somewhere else,” Rogers continues. “This grocery chain purchased FileCabinet CS. They scan their invoices and shred them. Couple that with how I helped them reorganize their business with Financial Analysis CS, and they can’t get that from anyone else. How can they leave? They can, but why would they want to? It would be very painful for them, to be honest. A major reason for my success is the Creative Solutions tools I have.”



Discounts Are Still Available for Creative Solutions 26th Annual Users' Conference

You're invited to attend the 26th Annual Creative Solutions Users' Conference set for November 1-4, 2006, at the Gaylord Palms™ Resort and Convention Center in Orlando, Florida. We encourage you to register early for special savings; to reserve your hotel room; and to sign up for workshops, discounted Orlando attraction tickets, the golf outing, and more.

Don't miss this opportunity to relax with your colleagues in a non-competitive environment as you hear nationally recognized speakers, attend informative workshops, and keep up on new products, services, and enhancements—all designed to help you advance and protect your most profitable investment—your firm. This year, you can choose from more than 60 workshops including these newcomers: Smart Employee Management, Developing Stronger Presentation and



Communication Skills, Child Support and the Employer, 20 Things That Smart Firms Do, Getting More Out of Your Website, and much more!

Register by October 4 and Save up to \$150

To make attendance economical, we're maintaining the same \$995 registration fee as last year and offering several discounts:

Register by **October 4 to SAVE \$50**

Last year's attendees **SAVE \$50**

Additional firm attendees **SAVE \$50**

Bottom line—you can **SAVE \$100** if you're the first in your firm to register by October 4 and attended last year. And, additional attendees from your firm can **SAVE \$50** each. So don't wait; register now!

Easy Online Registration

For the fastest and easiest way to register, visit **CreativeSolutions.Thomson.com/UC**. Here you'll find the Users' Conference program that provides all the information you'll need to register, including workshop descriptions, schedules, and more. For more information, to request a printed program, or to register by phone, please call a Creative Solutions Customer Service Representative at **(800) 968-0600**.

New Home Page Adds Convenience and Efficiency for CS Professional Suite Accounting Users

In the evolutionary process of developing quality software, we are pleased to announce the creation of the new home page in the CS Professional Suite Accounting products. Designed specifically for CS Professional Suite Accounting users, the home page will be included in the October 2006 release.

The home page provides users with a single location for accessing helpful, timely information. Centralization of information is not only exceptionally convenient for our customers, but also helps users stay organized, maintain updated software, and increase efficiency. Some of the information available to users on the new home page includes:

- **Federal and state payroll tax forms**—Detailed status and availability information on which forms are supported and approved for filing, what types of electronic filing are supported, and more.
- **Quick links to research, clients, and tasks**—Fast and easy access to helpful research sites (PPC, RIA, SSA), the American Payroll Association State links, and common tasks (such as adding or opening a client).
- **Licensing, systems, and data locations**—Firm licensing information, detailed system information needed for Support assistance, and data locations for other Creative Solutions products.
- **Time-sensitive product notices**—Timely notification of available CS Connect updates, expiring licenses,

renewal information, and more.

Links will be provided where action is required.

The home page is a powerful new feature that will further enhance firm productivity. We are confident that our users will appreciate the added convenience and efficiency that the new home page offers.

Welcome Dunphy Customers!

In May of this year, Creative Solutions announced the purchase of the Dunphy Systems software line. We are excited to welcome Dunphy customers into the Creative Solutions family and want to do anything we can to make your transition as smooth as possible. To assist you, we've provided helpful information and resources on our website, including

information on free training seminars, links to demos and trial software, and a detailed Dunphy to UltraTax CS transition guide. To access this information, simply visit our website at CreativeSolutions.Thomson.com and click the "Welcome Dunphy Users" link on our home page.

Again, we extend a warm welcome to our Dunphy customers. If there's anything we can do to assist you with your evaluation of UltraTax CS, please contact a Dunphy to UltraTax CS Transition Specialist at (800) 226-5800.

Creative Solutions User, David Ligotti, Wins Crain's Detroit Business® Small Business Award

At a ceremony held on June 21, 2006, David Ligotti, owner of Oakwood Business Services, L.L.C., was one of seven winners presented with a Crain's Detroit Business Small Business Award. Crain's annual business awards honor local southeastern Michigan small businesses that have proven exceptionally innovative or have overcome obstacles to enhance business operations and improve the organization overall.

Among more than 30 nominations, Ligotti was recognized for his innovative application of the Internet and software to create a virtual accounting office and expand his reach nationwide. Today, Ligotti's firm provides accounting services for 80 companies in about 10 states and continues to grow.

You can learn more about David Ligotti and how he built his virtual

accounting office by reading the full article located on the Creative Solutions website at CreativeSolutions.Thomson.com.

An Update on E-filing Mandates

Creative Solutions continues to lead the industry in the support of electronic filing by providing e-filing for all state entities that accept it. To make it easier than ever, we are implementing some enhancements to comply with the many changes to e-filing requirements. The following sections offer a succinct list of recent e-filing changes by entity.

1120 Update

- We are planning to add electronic filing capabilities for the following 1120 states: AL, GA, KS, LA, MD, MO, NC, NY, SC, UT and WI.

- According to the IRS website, corporations that have assets of \$50 million or more and file at least 250 returns annually are required to electronically file their 1120/1120S income tax returns for tax years ending on or after December 31, 2005. After the first effective year, the requirement will affect corporations that have assets of \$10 million or more and file at least 250 returns annually.

1040 Update

- Connecticut and New York both modified their 1040 e-filing mandates. Preparers who prepared 100 or more NY or CT income tax returns in 2005 are now required to file all 2006 NY or CT personal income tax returns electronically, using the federal/state elec-

tronic filing program.

- West Virginia preparers who prepared 100 or more WV income tax returns in 2005 are now required to file all 2006 WV personal income tax returns electronically, using the federal/state electronic filing program.

- Louisiana's 1040 mandates are scheduled for 2007 and later (not effective until January 1, 2008).

- The Michigan 1040 and 1041 products now include the traditional forms for preparing 1040/1041 returns, as well as SBT returns as applicable for 1040 and 1041 clients.

1065 Update—E-filing states for 2006 are still pending for UltraTax/1065.

1041 Update—Creative Solutions provides 1041 e-filing for those states where it is mandated.

Two New Conversions Available for Practice CS!

Creative Solutions now offers conversion and client data import capabilities to assist users who are transitioning to Practice CS from Creative Solutions' Scheduling Solution or CCH/Sage (formerly CPASS' Visual Practice Management). For firms that transition to Practice CS, our conversion programs make it easy to move to new software with minimal disruption.

Creative Solutions offers two options for data conversion:

Demographic Conversion—This conversion imports your demographic data, accounts receivable, and WIP (as well as ticklers and tasks if converting from Practice Solution). We recommend this option, as it enables you to clean up data files and begin with an updated database. There is no cost to you for conversion of demographic data.

Detailed Historical Conversion—This entails full conversion of all your data. For more information on historical data conversion and pricing, please contact a Creative Solutions Account Representative at (800) 968-8900.

Special Announcement: New Microsoft Operating System Scheduled for Release in 2007

As a certified Microsoft partner, Thomson Creative Solutions is committed to supporting Microsoft's next-generation operating system, Windows Vista™, which is scheduled for release in early 2007. As your technology partner, we understand that the beginning of the year is not the best time to update your hardware. Therefore, if you

plan to upgrade to Vista, we encourage you to do so later in the year—after the rush of tax season is behind you. In the meantime, rest assured that Creative Solutions will be actively testing Microsoft Vista to ensure compatibility with all your applications and so that we can assist you with your transition as needed.

ANYTIME, ANYWHERE, NO MATTER WHAT

FLORIDA ACCOUNTANT USES VIRTUAL OFFICE CS TO PROVIDE HERSELF AND HER CLIENTS 24/7 INTERNET ACCESS TO SOFTWARE AND DATA.

A little more than one year ago, Sonya Laney left a good job at a large public accounting firm to spend more quality time with her husband and twin 11-year-old daughters. She opened Sonya L. Laney, P.A., offering accounting, tax preparation and small business consulting services in Daytona Beach Shores, Florida.

Six months into her new venture, Laney made a similar commitment to her 38 corporate and 185 tax clients by investing in Virtual Office CS.

"I began to question data integrity and security, because everything was on a local system," Laney says. "I thought long and hard about what would happen if I was annihilated by a hurricane, had a fire, or if the office was broken into. What would happen to my clientele and what would happen to me if any of those events occurred? I wasn't prepared for the unknown."

Laney chooses to work in a paperless environment; her entire business is on a single piece of hardware. She scans all client documents for her records and returns the originals.

"I want to be efficient, effective, and paperless to protect myself and my clientele, and as a result, everything is on my computer," she says. "I streamline my functions by scanning all my clients' source documents. I don't keep their paper; I give them back everything. I don't ever have to worry about losing their documents if a catastrophe occurred. The clients are responsible for storing their own documents. I put

everything on a digital image. It's easier and less expensive to store on CDs. But because I'm a one-person operation, I was concerned about what would happen if someone got hold of my computer or was able to access it."

Anytime-anywhere access

Virtual Office CS provides anytime-anywhere access to CS Professional Suite, Microsoft® Office®, and Microsoft Exchange software and files. Using advanced Application Service Provider (ASP) technology, Virtual Office CS is an

"No one person or no event can put me out of business anymore," Laney says. "I have taken the things I can't control and have made them a speed bump in life with Virtual Office CS."

alternate software delivery service that offers remote 24/7 Internet access to software and data, relieving the IT burden and ensuring business continuance—no matter the situation.

In Virtual Office CS, programs operate exactly as if the software were residing on the business's computer. And, all calculations and data are running on secure servers in the Thomson Data Center. Creative Solutions is responsible for hardware and software maintenance and updates, relieving the accountant and staff of the effort. The user just logs

on and goes to work.

"No one person or no event can put me out of business anymore," Laney says. "I have taken the things I can't control and have made them a speed bump in life with Virtual Office CS. I can't live worrying about tomorrow, but I have to anticipate. This software is my insurance policy to prevent having my clients' data out there for the whole world to see. It protects them from identity theft and privacy issues and that gives them a good feeling. And, it keeps me in business."

"I don't want to be bothered trying to create a website," she says. "I don't know how to do it and don't want to learn. I can go into Creative Solutions' Web Builder CS software and change my site whenever I want. They have the intelligence and software. I tell them what I want on my site and it miraculously appears. I maintain my website through them. I just need a password to login."

Laney's website is also secure, and includes her e-mail.

"My goal is to turn over everything in my practice to a secure environment," she says. "Creative Solutions is responsible for backing up my information. They house it on their own secure servers. I don't have to worry about it."

Virtual Office CS offers many other features, and allows Laney to work on tax returns from her home. All she needs is a high-speed Internet connection. And what if she wants to set up a client with Client Bookkeeping Solution?

"Prior to Virtual Office CS, I had to run a license disk from my office, and take the software to the client and install

AT A GLANCE

SONYA LANEY, P.A.

Daytona Beach Shores, Florida

Sole Practitioner

Clients:

- Tax
- Corporate



it,” she says. “I don’t do that anymore. I simply download the disk from their office and import the license and software. I don’t take anything, and I can do it from anywhere. And there’s another advantage to Virtual Office CS and working in a paperless environment. If I have to go back and look at documentation or if a client has an audit, I have everything at my fingertips. If a client calls asking where to sign on an Internal Revenue Service form, for example, I go into their FileCabinet CS folder and look at the same document they’re looking at and tell them where to sign.”

‘Spoke and hub’ system

Laney got into bookkeeping/accounting working for her father, who is a general contractor. She worked her way up from answering telephones to being the comptroller. She earned her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in accounting from Stetson University in Florida, where she received numerous awards and scholarships. Laney is nearing completion of her CPA requirements.

She describes Creative Solutions software as a “spoke and hub” system.

“The points around the wheel are the various software programs, and they all meet together,” she explains. “The software integrates very well. I only have to enter information one time.”

Laney has used products from several other software companies, and says the difference between those products and Creative Solutions is night and day.

“When I went into business for myself I knew it was going to be me doing most of the work,” she adds. “I had to make sure all my bases were covered for the quality and service I wanted to provide

and for the image I wanted to portray. The software Creative Solutions offers does all that. It offers efficiency and is effective. Everything integrates nicely. There are no glitches or import issues. Then there is the level of professionalism. There is no comparison between the financial statements I prepare versus those from other software companies.

“With regard to quality, integration, and research,” she continues, “when I’m using UltraTax CS I can right click on any line on a tax form and it takes me on the Internet to an explanation of that particular line. It’s easy to use and saves me time. All software offers some form of integration and research, but because I’m trying to go in a specific

“Creative Solutions does all the work, which makes my life easier,” Laney says. “They were fabulous working with me to get to the Virtual Office CS environment.”

direction with my business I have to have software that works together, is user friendly and has technical support. I have to be able to call a real person

who I can understand, which is essential. Creative Solutions software is constantly being updated. I had a problem during tax season, called them, and by that evening the software was updated. This is blanketed across the country. I may never encounter a problem someone else had because they called and Creative Solutions fixed it. That’s fabulous.”

Laney also appreciates the fact that Creative Solutions works with individual states to make sure the forms are compliant with her location, sometimes all the way down to the county level.



“Creative Solutions does all the work, which makes my life easier,” she says. “They were fabulous working with me to get to the Virtual Office CS environment. I’m a dedicated customer, and Creative Solutions does whatever it takes to work with me.”

ULTRATAX CS

Q: How do I complete Form 1040X, Amended U.S. Individual Income Tax Return in UltraTax CS?

A: First, verify that the information on Form 1040 is the information that should be used as the originally reported information. (Originally reported information is defined as the information contained in the return the last time it was printed.) Click the General folder in the folders block, then click the Amend tab to open Screen Amend. Enter **X** in the **Transfer original information** field to populate the **As Originally Reported** fields on Screen Amend. Next, scroll down and open the statement dialog attached to the **Explanation of changes** field, and enter an explanation of changes to income, deductions, and credits. If the state return needs to be amended, you will find a STAmnd tab in the state product's General folder, where you can mark the **Transfer original information** field to populate the originally reported state information. Finally, make the necessary changes to the client data in the applicable federal and (if applicable) state input screens to complete the amended return. Amended filing instructions will print with Form 1040X and (if applicable) with the amended state return.

Q: Can I print a list of all returns on extension to find out which returns still need to be completed?

A: Yes. To print reports based on certain criteria, choose Utilities / Reports / Client Listings. In the Client Listings dialog, click the **General Client Information** option and then click Continue to open the Select Clients for Report dialog. Listed in the left pane are the clients available for selection, based on the options chosen in the Focus client listing group box. Click the Modify button, then click the second option and select **Logged** from the first field's drop-down list and **Extension printed** from the second field. You can further narrow your selection criteria by clicking the Another button and selecting another event such as "Not Logged" at "Return Completed" (which would be a user-defined event). Once you click OK to close the dialog, the client list in the left pane is restricted to those who meet your selected status criteria. Click the Select All button to move all clients to the right pane (thereby including all relevant clients in the report) and then preview or print the report.

Tip for Using UltraTax CS

Keep apprised of the latest news regarding electronic filing by downloading Electronic Filing bulletins. To do so, choose Utilities / CS Connect to open the CS Connect window. Then

mark the **Retrieve ELF / PRP reports and ELF News** checkbox. Electronic Filing bulletins will be selected automatically on the ELF / PRP Reports tab. When you place your next CS Connect call, the available Electronic Filing bulletins will be downloaded. You can then view the bulletins by choosing Utilities / Reports / ELF/PRP. The bulletins are continuously updated as Creative Solutions receives information from the various taxing authorities.

WEB SERVICES

Q: What do I do if a NetStaff CS or NetClient CS user login is locked out?

A: As a result of recently implemented security enhancements, if a NetStaff CS or NetClient CS user makes ten consecutive unsuccessful login attempts, the login will be locked. An email message is sent to the NetStaff CS or NetClient CS user's address (the address assigned to that login), which notifies the user of the unsuccessful login attempts and provides a link to unlock the login immediately. The lock automatically expires after 30 minutes.

Tips for Using NetStaff CS and NetClient CS

- In NetStaff CS, you can use groups to simplify new staff setup. Setting up groups allows you to assign module permissions to batches of users simultaneously.

To create a group, log in to NetStaff CS as an administrator, click the NetStaff CS tab, and then click the **Groups navigation** link to open the Groups page. In that page, click the Add Group button, enter the group name and description, and click OK to save the group. Locate the group names in the Groups page, click the corresponding **Permissions** link to indicate which modules should be available to members of the group, and then click OK.

Once you create a group, you can assign users to it. This enables you to set permissions for a collection of users at once. In the Groups page, click the **Members** link that corresponds to the group, move each appropriate user to the Group Member List, and click OK to save your changes.

- You can set up NetStaff CS to send email notifications to NetClient CS and/or NetStaff CS users when new Document Presentation files are transmitted, when new File Exchange documents are uploaded, or when Web Employee users make changes to their W-4 information.

To set up these notifications, log in to NetStaff CS as an administrator, click the Utilities tab, and then click the **Notification navigation** link. Click the **Edit** link that corresponds to the type of alert you want to enable and use the arrow buttons in the Edit Notification Recipients page to indicate which users should receive the notification alerts. For more information, click the Help link at the top of any NetStaff CS page, click the Index button, and search on “Notifications.”

CLIENT BOOKKEEPING SOLUTION (CBS)

Q: Is there any way for my client to print blank MICR checks to use for handwritten checks?

A: Yes. Starting with CBS version 2006.2.x, you can print blank MICR checks from CBS CheckWriter, CBS PayCheck, or CBS Accounts Payable.

Q: I changed the address for one of my vendors, but when I print an Accounts Payable check for that vendor the old address still prints on the check. How can I fix this?

A: CBS uses the mailing address for printed checks. To change a vendor’s mailing address, choose Setup / Vendors, highlight the vendor whose address has changed, click the Mailing Address tab, and enter the updated address information.

Q: What happens to the account balances in CS Professional Suite Accounting if my client deletes a prior-period check in CBS?

A: When a prior-period check is deleted in CBS, the program creates a reversing transaction using the same date as the original transaction. When you retrieve that transaction, Accountant’s Assistant prompts you to choose whether to place the prior-period transaction in the current GL period or in the appropriate GL period based on the transaction date.

WRITE-UP CS

Q: How often should I compact my client data from within the Help / Repair dialog?

A: It is important to use the Compact Client utility from within the Help / Repair dialog to maintain your client database files by compacting or cleaning them. We recommend compacting your data at least once each year as part of normal maintenance to improve database performance and correct any small database damage that might exist. We suggest

compacting client data more often than once per year if you process the client data more frequently (weekly or monthly) or if the file size is very large. In the Help / Repair dialog, select the client whose data you want to compact and then click the Compact Client button. A prompt opens automatically after the process has been successfully completed.

Tip for Using Write-Up CS

Prevent data errors in Write-Up CS. If a write-up client has multiple checkbooks and you carry out bank reconciliations for those accounts, you will find that setting up a separate journal for each checkbook account can be helpful in a number of ways. When you choose Setup / Journals, you can specify a default Balance Account to save time during data entry and to ensure that you are balancing checkbooks and deposits to the correct account. During data entry for GL transactions, simply press ALT+B to balance checks and/or deposits, and the program automatically enters the checking account number for you. (You can override that account later, if necessary.) You just need to press ENTER to save the transaction. This guarantees that your checks and deposits show up in the correct bank reconciliation.

PAYROLL CS

Q: I need to print multiple child support payments for a client. What is the best way to set this up?

A: Set up each client with a unique vendor name for each employee — for example “Friend of the Court – <employee name>.” In the Address and Accounts tab of the Vendors window, enter the name as it should be displayed on the check. This allows you to print separate checks for each employee and maintain the year-to-date payment history on each vendor record.

Q: Can I file the annual Form 944 using Payroll CS or Write-Up CS?

A: Yes. To do so, mark the 944 checkbox in the Payroll tab of the Client Properties dialog. Form 944 will then be available in the Payroll Tax Processing window. Note that electronic filing for Form 944 will be available in January 2007.

TRIAL BALANCE CS

Q: I have five companies that need to be consolidated. Can this be done in Trial Balance CS?

A: Yes. Set up a sixth company to represent the consolidated

company. In the General Information tab of the Client Properties dialog, mark the **Consolidation Client** checkbox and the **Account Balances Only** checkbox. This gives you the ability to consolidate by grouping schedule or account number. When you're ready to begin the consolidation process, choose File / Consolidate Clients.

ENGAGEMENT CS

Q: I am trying to create a five-year comparison report in Engagement CS, but only the current-year and prior-year amounts are showing up in Microsoft Excel. Is there a way to correct this?

A: Yes. In the General tab of the File / Engagement Properties dialog, you can select the **Number of years of balances to use**. Increase the number from two (default) to five and click OK. The next time you open the workpaper, five years of balances will be available to pull into the workpaper.

Q: During roll forward, I would like to clear tick-mark columns on the leadsheet schedule. Can this be done?

A: Yes. You can highlight the items linked from Engagement CS in the workpaper or document and then click the **Clear during Roll Forward** button in the Engagement CS menu in Word or Excel. The items selected to be cleared during roll forward will be displayed on the screen in a green font.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS CS

Q: Is there a way to see how the client's GL accounts transferred from Write-Up CS or Trial Balance CS into Financial Analysis CS? Can those be changed?

A: The categories in Financial Analysis CS can be viewed or printed in the Account Mapping Diagnostic Report that displays how specific accounts were mapped between a client that was transferred from Write-Up CS or Trial Balance CS into Financial Analysis CS. To open this report in Financial Analysis CS, choose File / Print Reports and double-click the Diagnostics / Account Mapping Diagnostic Report near the bottom of the reports list pane. Select the client in the Report Options section of the Print Reports screen. The report displays the account names that were transferred, the grouping schedule codes or account group names, and the equivalent category name in Financial Analysis CS.

Q: Does the installation process for Financial Analysis CS differ from my other Creative Solutions software?

A: Yes. It is a different process because Financial Analysis CS stores data in an SQL or MSDE database and takes advantage of new technology such as the Microsoft .NET platform. While the installation process is not complex, it does require planning and a sound understanding of your firm's network configuration. It is important to review the **CS Professional Suite Accounting Products Installation and Program Essentials** guide, including the information specific to installing Financial Analysis CS (Chapter 3). If you need assistance, consult your network administrator or contact Creative Solutions Product Support prior to starting the installation process.

FIXED ASSETS CS

Q: Can I update print profiles in an existing client from the template client?

A: Yes. Open the client whose print profiles you want to update and choose Tasks / Update Profiles from Template.

Q: How can I determine when Fixed Assets CS will apply mid-quarter conventions to a client's assets?

A: Choose Tasks / Display Summary Information and click the Tax Summary tab. The MACRS mid-quarter group box (at the bottom of the tab) contains information about the percentage of assets that were placed in service during each quarter. If more than 40 percent of the basis of the client's assets were placed in service during the fourth quarter, Fixed Assets CS applies mid-quarter conventions.

FILECABINET CS

Q: How can I find out how much hard drive space my FileCabinet CS drawers, folders, and data locations are using?

A: Starting with FileCabinet CS version 05.1.0, you can view drawer, folder, and data-location statistics (for all data locations) by clicking the Stats button in either the Drawer Properties dialog, the Folder Properties dialog, or the Setup / System Configuration / Data Locations tab. You can view statistics for the current data location by clicking the Stats button in the File Locations tab of the Setup / User Preferences dialog.

Tip for Using FileCabinet CS

You can now preview documents in the FileCabinet CS Documents dialog before sending the print job to FileCabinet CS. You have this option when you print from other Creative Solutions applications, such as UltraTax CS or CS Professional Suite Accounting Products, or when you use the FileCabinet CS

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print driver to print from non-Creative Solutions applications. To preview a document, click the Preview tab in the FileCabinet CS Documents dialog. For multiple-page documents, use the arrow buttons to navigate through the pages. To continue printing, click the Document Names tab and then click OK

PRACTICE CS

Q: When viewing a report in Practice CS, is it possible to determine the source of the information in a given field?

A: Yes. Most reports in Practice CS include drill-down capability for certain fields. When previewing a report on screen, click the desired field to see if drill-down capability is available for that field. If so, Practice CS switches to the screen in which the data was originally entered. From there, you can view, edit, or delete the item as necessary.

Q: Can I view email messages from clients in Practice CS?

A: Yes. If you use Microsoft Outlook® 2000 or later as your email program, you can view all of the messages that you sent to and received from the selected client in the Outlook Mail portlet on the Client Dashboard. To open this portlet, right-click the dashboard, choose Add Portlet from the context menu, and mark the Outlook Mail checkbox.

Q: Can I track the time spent on a job or task without first starting a new transaction in Practice CS?

A: Yes. Practice CS provides a unique desktop timer. To open the timer, start Practice CS and right-click the Practice CS icon in the Windows system tray (next to the clock), then choose a client from the drop-down list. Practice CS displays the timer until you close it, and you can pause and restart the timer as needed by clicking the stop or start button. When the task is complete, maximize the timer and post the transaction to Time & Expense Entry by clicking the button to the right of the desired item.

CS Professional Suite

Client CS™	Financial Analysis CS™	Payroll CS™	ToolBox CS™	Virtual Office CS™
Engagement CS™	Fixed Assets CS™	Planner CS™	Trial Balance CS™	Web Builder CS™
FileCabinet CS™	NetClient CS™	Practice CS™	UltraTax CS™	Write-Up CS™

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