

Management Information Control Systems, Inc. — Builder Information System

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Builder Information System (BIS) is a fully integrated financial management system that is suitable for general contractors, construction companies, homebuilders, electrical, mechanical and other specialty contractors. Available in three versions — Standard, Professional and Enterprise — BIS is suitable for construction businesses of all sizes. And with the release of Version 1137, BIS is now compatible with Microsoft Vista.

▶ LEARNING CURVE/EASE OF USE

Version 1137 offers an entirely updated Installation Menu, offering new and existing users additional



BUILDER INFORMATION SYSTEM

information about the release, tax updates and much more. The program's main user interface features a menu bar at the top of the screen with a function button toolbar directly below. To the left of the screen is a series of navigational aids such as the following: My Desktop, which contains links to system modules; My Favorites, where frequently used functions can be placed; My Dashboard, where various jobs can be chosen and placed for an instant overview; and My Workspaces, where multiple functions can be opened as a group. Program navigation is easy, with lookup options available in all data-entry screens. New company setup is a breeze, and the excellent Help feature can assist with most questions that arise.

Job cost codes can be up to 10 alphanumeric characters and are completely user-definable. BIS offers flexible billing options including lump-sum, cost plus

or percentage of completion. The Cost Code Library is user-definable, as well, with various cost types including labor, material, subcontractor, equipment, and other direct cost supported. And individual budgets can be maintained for each cost code and cost type.

New functionality in the latest version of BIS is designed to allow the program to operate more efficiently than before. Various navigational tools have also been added, improving both system navigation and data-entry functionality. Sales invoices, debit memos and credit memos have all been redesigned for more efficient data entry, as well. ★★★★★

▶ MODULES & FUNCTIONALITY

The GL module is included in all versions of BIS. The Standard version also includes AR, AP, Job Cost, Job Billing and Payroll. The Professional and Enterprise editions offer all of these modules as optional, so users can build their own system accordingly. Other add-on modules available include Union, Bank Reconciliation, Subcontract Control, Password, Report Server, Job Scheduling, Document Link & Imaging, Document Manager, Equipment Control, Inventory, Purchase Order, and Report Writer.

The latest version also includes over 50 system enhancements, such as additional information fields, the addition of the AIA method of calculating stored materials for billing purposes, and new job navigation tools. The GL also offers improved job posting capabilities. ★★★★★

▶ PRODUCTIVITY TOOLS

Drill Down + provides the tools to access and organize information. Numbers can be reviewed on report previews, with drilldown to original documentation and the ability to edit information on the fly as needed. With the Document Link and Imaging module, users can link files such as job schedules, building blueprints or site photos to transactions or master records. The

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My Workspaces feature mentioned earlier allows for the creation of personalized workspaces based on specific criteria, enabling the user to work smarter and faster. The Multiple Document Interface allows several documents to be opened simultaneously with the ability to simply switch between them as needed. And the Document Manager electronically stores documents that can be accessed as needed. ★★★★★

▶ IMPORT/EXPORT/ INTEGRATION

New in this latest version is the Job Scheduling Export feature that allows for the export of job schedules created in BIS to Microsoft Project. Since many other scheduling programs can import the Microsoft Project format, these export files can be used with them, as well. This allows for easier access by owners, subcontractors or anyone else involved in the job.

As previously mentioned, BIS offers an extensive array of add-on modules, integrating each piece. The program is

ODBC compliant and allows users to easily export system data to third-party applications such as Microsoft Excel, Word and Access. Scalability is offered with three separate editions of the base program available that can be utilized in scenarios that range from a single user to 1,000 users with the Enterprise version. ★★★★★

▶ REPORTING

The latest version also offers many reporting upgrades, including the addition of several new reports in the Accounts Payable, Payroll and Purchase Order modules. In addition, users that have the Job Cost module now have the ability to access the Job Billing History Report. The Report Server allows a user to select a group of reports of their choice and schedule them to be automatically e-mailed, exported or printed in the format of their choice, including Microsoft Excel and Word, PDF, TIFF or TXT. Various standard reports are included in BIS, and the BIS Report Writer can be utilized to create custom reports. BIS data can be accessed through the ODBC driver from other third-party report writing applications, including Crystal Reports. ★★★★★

▶ SUPPORT & TRAINING

BIS has recently added two additional reference manuals for a total of

20 manuals available on the installation CD. It currently consists of more than 3,100 pages to assist users in getting the most out of the program. Also new in 2007, six months of unlimited training and technical support for \$699 has been added when the program is purchased. Once that time has expired, if users wish they can purchase one of many support plans.

The four-hour tech support plan costs \$499; the three-hour training plan costs \$379. The Bronze Total Support Package is currently \$699 and includes three hours of training and four hours of technical support. Onsite training options are available, as well, and start at \$1,000 per day for a minimum of two days. ★★★★★

▶ RELATIVE VALUE

BIS is an excellent construction accounting product. It can serve the one-person office to hundreds of users without ever having to change software. As a company grows, it can easily upgrade to a different Edition, which allows BIS to grow with the company. Starting at \$4,060 for a single-user Standard system, BIS is easy to navigate, offers an extensive array of add-on modules, and can fit smoothly into any construction-related business. ★★★★★

2008 OVERALL RATING

★★★★★



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