

Open Source Accounting Software

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Abstract— Purchasing an accounting software, especially for starting businesses, is a costly affair due to prohibitive licensing costs. Even for a large business establishment, costs incurred in licensing of accounting software will take a substantial proportion of the annual budget. Also, small business establishments may find it difficult to purchase licensed accounting software and as such, may opt for an unlicensed pirated copy of the original software. In addition, institutions that deal with teaching accounting find it difficult to afford hundreds of multiple copies of licensed software to be installed in computer laboratories. This paper highlights major open source software that can be freely downloaded from the Internet and be used for accounting purposes.

I. INTRODUCTION

Developing open sources software involves a community of thousands of users spread out over the Internet contributing to a single goal of developing a computer program to achieve a specific task. These programs are licensed under GNU General Public License (GPL) that allows a user to redistribute copies the software for free, modify or improve the program or freedom to run the program for any purpose, among others. In most cases, open source software can be freely downloaded from the Internet and installed in the computer under GPL license.

This paper investigates such open source software that can be used for accounting purposes in small, medium or enterprise level business establishments

GNU CASH

For personal and small-business establishments, GNU Cash provides facilities to track bank accounts, stock, income and expenses and is based on standard accounting principles to provide balanced books and accurate accounting reports. It features double entry accounting, stock/bond or mutual fund accounts, customers, vendors, invoices, graphical reports,

financial transactions, etc. The software can be freely downloaded from “<http://www.gnucash.org>” for Windows, Linux or Mac operating systems.

Compiere

Compiere is an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software package that can deal with materials, order management, purchasing, finance and business performance management, manufacturing, warehousing, etc. The open source edition of this software for Windows operating system is available at “<http://www.compiere.org>”.

LedgerSMB

An open source software for the Linux operating system, LedgerSMB offers financial accounting, AR, AP & GL tracking as well as inventory control. This program is available at “<http://www.ledgersmb.org>”.

Turbo Cash

This software offers bank, cash & credit card accounts, debtors/creditors, VAT management, invoicing, emailing of invoices, customer & supplier records, stock control, purchase orders, cheque printing, report customization, multi company and multi user, closing date for accounting periods, etc. This installation file of this software is freely available for Windows operating system at “<http://www.turbocashuk.com>”. After 150 transactions, it needs to be registered at the company’s website for free.

Post Books

Although some technical expertise is required to install Post Books, the free edition handles sales orders, accounts receivables/payables, purchase orders, GL, shipping/receiving, inventory (for single warehouse), item master information, bills of material, work orders, project management, multi currency, financial reporting, among others. It is available for Windows and Linux operating systems at “<http://sourceforge.net/projects/postbooks>”.

Lazy8 Ledger

A web-based accounting software, Lazy8 Ledger, offers much functionality as it is installed in a server environment. It has the immediate advantage of having the accountant and the customer working on the same book-keeping at the same time over the Internet by using a simple web browser. It provides GL, multi-company, chart of accounts, reports (balance/results, transactions, accounts summary, char of accounts, customer/projects, VAT reports), financial analysis (graphs, trends), import/export feature for compatibility with other accounting systems. The software is available free for download at "[http:// lazy8.nu](http://lazy8.nu)".

Grisbi

Running under Linux or Windows operating systems, Grisbi is a personal accounting system for basic use. It supports budgeting, financial years, multiple accounts and users, multiple currencies, etc. It can be downloaded from "<http://www.grisbi.org>".

Open Accounting

It is also a web-based accounting system that provides sales, purchasing, items & inventory, manufacturing, projects, banking, GL, access and customization, advanced taxation and multi-currency. Installation of the software needs technical expertise of handling Apache, My Sql and PHP web services. The software is available for download freely from "[http:// open-accounting.sourceforge.net](http://open-accounting.sourceforge.net)".

XIWA

Xiwa is a web-based accounting software that can be installed in a Linux environment and is suited for enterprise level business establishments. Users can access the system from a web browser and perform all transactions and functions. The software offers double entry accounting, balance sheets, cash flow, profit and loss reports, multiple users, multiple sets of books (ledgers) opened at the same time, chart of accounts, accounts/codes sharing between ledgers, cheque register, bank reconciliations, payroll support, detailed stock history, among others. The site to download the software is "<http://xiwa.sourceforge.net>".

AdminSoft

This software records all customer details, print sales invoices, supplier records, debtors, creditors, GL, trial balances, stock control, reports, manufacturing, cash book and bank reconciliations. The software is available at "[http:// www.adminsoftware.biz](http://www.adminsoftware.biz)".

SQL Ledger

Another web-based software application, SQL Ledger offers accounts receivable/payable, vouchers, GL, inventory, billing, time cards, recurring invoices, point of sales, cheque printing, purchase/sales orders, customizable taxes, multi-user and multi-company, audit control, foreign currency , char of accounts, financial statements, etc. The software can be installed in Windows or Linux environment by downloading the appropriate installation files from "[http :// www.sql-ledger.org](http://www.sql-ledger.org)".

OFBiz

OFBiz is a reliable and scalable enterprise accounting solution for large organizations. It offers advanced e-commerce, catalogue management, promotion and pricing management, order management, customer management, warehouse management, accounting (invoice, payment & billing accounts, fixed assets), manufacturing, general work effort management (events, tasks, projects, requests, etc), content management (for product content, web sites, general content, blogging, forums, etc), point of sales, among others. It can be freely downloaded from "<http://ofbiz.apache.org>".

Web ERP

A web-based software for medium sized or large establishments, Web ERP is installed in a server environment handling users and customers via a web browser. Its functionality includes sales orders, accounts receivable, user defined sales analysis, purchase orders, accounts payable, inventory management, GL, manufacturing, multi currency, tax, multiple inventory locations with serial number and lot tracking, full double entry accounting, materials requirement planning, etc. It is available at "[http:// sourceforge.net/projects/web-erp](http://sourceforge.net/projects/web-erp)".