

# eTEK International Inc. — MTX Job Cost Accounting

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*eTEK* continues to offer its powerful integrated cost accounting suite to the construction industry, with a new round of enhancements and recent certification by Microsoft for Windows XP. While many products reviewed in this series are “compatible” with Windows XP, only a few have mounted the significant testing effort required to be “certified” by Microsoft. In addition, *eTEK* also released a new version of its products for Microsoft Office 2003. A complete single-user *eTEK* Xpress system can be purchased for \$4,875, including support and training; comparable complete multi-user MTX systems range from \$9,595 to \$11,995; large-scale Millennium+ SQL versions start at \$17,995.

## LEARNING CURVE

Installation of the MTX Job Cost suite is a simple process, using a wizard-based installation screen. The process varies depending on which product level you’re installing. The product reviewed here is the “MTX” product, which is the mid-level product for two to five users. Other product levels include *eTEK* Xpress for the single user, and Millennium+, which uses the

Microsoft SQL Server database for enterprise-level use. In the past, all *eTEK* products required the separate purchase of Microsoft Access 2000, XP or 2003. However, with *eTEK* Xpress, the Microsoft Access runtime is included, which eliminates this additional purchase. A sample company database is included for training and testing.

The user interface is similar for all *eTEK* product levels, which allows an easy upgrade path through all product levels with no retraining. The main menu is a window with a drop-down list of available modules. Also included is a box with tabs for Data Entry, Inquiry, Reports and Actions. As you select a module from the drop-down list, the items in the tabs change to reflect the choices for that module. Double-clicking any of the items in the tabbed box launches the data-entry form, query, report or process selected.

Data-entry screens are similarly simple and well designed to make the most productive use of the Microsoft Access user interface capabilities. Key fields utilize drop-down lists that can also be used to quickly launch a find window for things like customer, vendor and so forth. Toolbars are also dynamically updated to reflect available form functions like opening detailed information screens. Most screens feature multi-tab dialog

boxes that keep information segregated into various categories to keep data-entry windows from becoming cluttered. For screens such as entering invoices, customers can be added on the fly just by double-clicking on the customer field. ★★★★★

## MODULES & FUNCTIONALITY

MTX Job Cost Accounting is really just a customized module set, based on the more generalized *eTEK* Accounting for Microsoft Office product. The Job Cost module set includes AP, AR, GL, Payroll, Job Cost, Inventory Control, Sales Order, Purchase Order and Cash Management. Other optional modules available include Report Wizards, A.I.A. Billing and Supply Chain Management. Beyond that, several auxiliary modules provide specialized functionality, such as a wireless PDA interface, project management and job scheduling, and blank-stock check printing.

*eTEK* Accounting modules use a flexible batch-posting system that can be used to post transactions one at a time as they’re entered or accumulated for quicker data entry and then posted together as a separate process. The advantage of immediate posting is that transactions are available in real-time for reports and other queries.

Configuration flexibility is one

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of the program's strongest features. The user-defined "4x9" GL account structure supports up to four segments (account number, division, department and product) with up to nine digits each. An equivalent job cost structure defines project, job, phase and task segments. With up to 366 fiscal periods per year, information can be tracked to almost any level of detail or period.

The Job Cost module gives you powerful tracking of actual vs. estimated amounts for labor, material, subcontractor, and equipment costs and revenues using an unlimited number of user-defined tasks within phases, phases within jobs, and jobs within projects. The on-screen job cost summary inquiry lets you query the database at whatever level you wish. For instance, you can select just the project level to see the big-picture comparison of actual and estimated amounts. Or you can select successively detailed levels to zero in on the exact items you wish to analyze. The Source Transaction Detail inquiry screen gives you a similar set of options, but allows you to drill down and see the actual transactions for any job project, phase or task.

eTEK offers the complete source code for the MTX Job Cost system modules. This means the system can be customized to meet nearly any specialized need imaginable. It also assures that your investment in the product is secure since you have access to all database structure information, as well as the

underlying business logic for the program. ★★★★★

## IMPORT/EXPORT/INTEGRATION

Microsoft Access natively provides extensive integration and data exchange capabilities with other Microsoft Office products. All reports have an Office Links button available that lets you export data to Word or Excel. Fully customizable exports are provided through the open database architecture. There are no built-in imports or conversions from other packages. However, these could be achieved through custom import programs. As mentioned above, MTX is built on an open, non-proprietary database, which provides the ultimate data export/import flexibility. ★★★★★

## SUPPORT & TRAINING

eTEK offers toll-free support to customers with a current maintenance agreement. A well-written manual and online help system should be sufficient to address everyday usage questions and procedures. The online help is not context sensitive but is organized by module and can be searched by keyword. Topical links are also provided. Training can be arranged with the company. Nearly all user training is now conducted interactively on the web, with one-on-one sessions available. ★★★★★

## REPORTING

Over 200 built-in reports contain numerous selections for record filtering, sorting and detail levels. Each

report is created with the Microsoft Access report builder, so they can be previewed, printed, or easily exported to Word or Excel using Office Links. In addition, you are free to use separately purchased third-party utilities such as Crystal Reports to create any number of custom reports.

The Job Cost module provides 12 built-in reports: Job Cost Reports, Work in Progress, Daily Log Report, Subcontractor Cost Analysis by Job, Subcontractor Cost Analysis by Sub, Billings/Receipts Analysis, Job Cost Vendor Analysis, Equipment/Labor Charges, Job Name List, Use Tax, Equipment List, and Equipment Expenses. Similar to the inquiry screens, these reports can be produced at any level desired to show summarized or detailed information. ★★★★★

## RELATIVE VALUE

MTX Job Cost Accounting continues to represent solid, first-class design and implementation. The Microsoft compatibility certification assures that you are unlikely to run into strange or difficult product issues that cannot be quickly identified and resolved. The whole system is built on the latest Microsoft technology, which will require you to keep your software up to date with an adequate hardware platform. The payoff is a system that will perform reliably for a broad range of business types and sizes. ★★★★★

## 2005 OVERALL RATING

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