

## Computerized Accounts Packages

Computerized accounts systems are worse than a waste of time; they turn out to be a major distraction and do not work. For employees it is the perfect excuse for doing nothing. My staff complain, 'I don't know how to operate it' when it comes with a self instruction manual or 'it has malfunctioned' or 'it has crashed!' I have wasted an enormous amount of staff time, energy and money on three computerized accountancy packages which were devised for landlords. None did the job. A simple spreadsheet or better, pen and paper does the job with far less time and trouble.

I have doubts whether any of the landlord's accountancy packages actually work. I have yet to find a landlord who is effectively using a computerized accounts system. Yes, there are plenty of landlords out there who may be using an accountancy package but how reliable or complete are the results? I wonder. If you compared it to a car would you put up

with a car that kept crashing every few miles, took ages to start, insisted that you used only one or limited often out of the way routes and had numerous other problems. I don't think so.

I have given up cross-examining landlords who try and impress me with their accountancy packages. They might as well be boasting how clever they are or how big something is. When you prompt and probe the package has yet to prove itself. Yes, it may have plenty of features but often they have not used them and what use are these features? Do they make a profit for you? No they do not! None of these packages actually do what they claim on the box they do.

I am amazed how the technology industry keeps getting away with selling untested products with exaggerated claims about performance. Even a few hours of use will show up faults so I wonder if they were ever tested. When I complained to one supplier I was contemptuously told if I wanted cutting edge technology I should expect problems.

Fine, but I could not find anywhere on the sales blurb, ‘Warning cutting edge technology, an untried product which will turn out to be neither use nor ornament!’ And I am still trying to puzzle out why a landlord’s accounts should be considered ‘cutting edge technology’.

In short, I believe technology is attractive to lazy people but as is so often the case the lazy way often turns out to be harder in the long run. My advice is to avoid computer packages like the plague until a well tested system is devised which is simple and easy to use. Never ever give up using your existing system until you have tried and tested the new system i.e. run both in parallel and I hope you have better luck than me.

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**Many thanks**

**Jim Haliburton**

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