

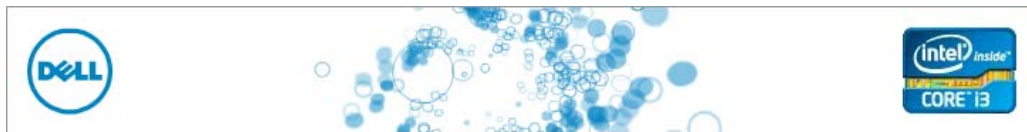
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April 14, 2011 | 2 Comments

# Online Tax Prep Services

Unless you're sure you've got a fat tax return coming, you probably don't look forward to doing your taxes. But these five online tax prep services can make the chore quick and easy.

By Sean Carroll

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It's that time of year again. Tax time. A few of your documents may still be straggling in, but chances are you've at least got your W-2s, and you've either got all the receipts you're going to need for your deductions or you're going to wing anyways. So why not get to work now? I suppose you could wait until Sunday to get started, but who needs all that last-minute pressure? It's never been simpler to get started—you don't even have to schlep down to the electronics store to buy a copy of the software anymore, or, worse, spend time haunting a depressing tax center waiting room. As long as you've got access to a browser, you can do your taxes without ever leaving home. Unless you've got a horribly complex return or have an issue with exposing your financials over the Internet, doing your taxes online is the simplest way to go about it. Accordingly, we've reviewed the best online tax packages for tax year 2010.

All the major tax prep players have had Web-based versions for years, and all look and work like their desktop counterparts, letting you [save](#) partially finished returns and finish them in multiple sessions. It's convenient, and the sites remember your [data](#) from year to year. Even if your local copy gets hosed, you've got a copy on the tax-prep site. And there's a good chance much of your basic data will carry over from year to year, giving you a headstart on the process.

Once you've chosen a tax-prep package, you'll need to decide which of the many versions of that company's service to use—the free 1040EZ version (generally you still have to pay to e-file for your state taxes at least), or the high-end SMB version, or something in between. You'll have to do a little research to make sure you get the right forms, for, say, [your small business'](#) income. But don't assume that you need the full-on ultimate premium premier version—with the exception of extra forms (and occasionally some higher-end help [functionality](#)) they're pretty much the same as the freebies, in terms of function and interface and so on. Don't overpay. If price is the determining factor for you, definitely check out TaxACT—even its high-end versions are dirt cheap.

I won't tell you that any of these online tax services can make tax time enjoyable, but the best of them can at least make the process relatively quick and painless.

Note that the thumbnail descriptions below link to our full reviews of the major players in the tax-prep space. Click through to read the full reviews by tax expert Kathy Yagal.

### CompleteTax Online



CompleteTax, a service of global financial services provider CCH, has some of the best guidance available on tax preparation sites. It also does a good job of exploring tax topics, and is offering free Premium versions to select populations for 2010.



### H&R Block At Home Premium



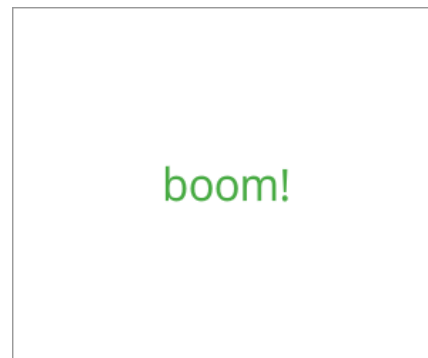
H&R Block At Home Premium Online gives TurboTax a run for its money every year. Premium's Best of Both option provides beginning-to-end support that no one else has ever offered, at a reasonable price.



### TaxSlayer.com Premium Edition



TaxSlayer.com's parent company has been in the tax preparation business for over 40



### ZoneAlarm SocialGuard

Focusing specifically on Facebook, SocialGuard does an impressive job of balancing protection and privacy.



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years, and its online offering is a capable 1040-tamer. But the site could use some improvement in the areas of navigation and help.

**TaxACT Online Ultimate Bundle**



TaxACT is the best buy available for the 2010 tax filing year. It supports all e-fileable IRS forms, walks the user easily and quickly through the 1040, and offers unlimited professional help for only \$7.95 extra.



**TurboTax Premier Online Edition**



TurboTax remains king of the hill. Though it has stiff competition, its combination of financial topics, guidance, navigational tools, and interface excellence make it the best choice for 2010 taxes.



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I used Turbo Tax and it did the job. Only thing is the property tax man then took my refund off my hands. Property tax for schools. One of the biggest rip offs ever pushed on the tax paying public. George Harrison was right.

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