

**FOCUS on MY BLIND SPOT for ACCESS to
QUICK BOOKS for WINDOWS 2014 – THE
WORLD’S LEADING SMALL BUSINESS
ACCOUNTING PROGRAM**

By: Albert J. Rizzi, CEO My Blind Spot, Inc.

We want to extend a sincere thank you to all of you who joined us on July 13th at our presentation for RSVA at the ACB's 53rd annual conference and convention in Las Vegas. As discussed during our presentation, My Blind Spot and Intuit have introduced accessibility and usability into QuickBooks for Windows for the first time. We have worked to ensure that the power of QuickBooks will be available for people of all abilities to independently calculate and manage the finances for their small businesses or the businesses of others.

In addition to offering screen reader enhancements and the QuickBooks programs at our MBS Store, we have developed a User's Guide and a set of self-paced virtual lessons, demonstrating the ease of keyboard navigation for setting up a chart of accounts, adding vendors, customers and employees, creating invoices, purchase orders, writing checks, generating financial reports to facilitate tax preparation, and more!

For those of you who were not able to listen in to the presentation, here is a "QuickBooks" overview of the usability and accessibility that has been reintroduced into the QuickBooks program. My Blind Spot and the Intuit

engineers looked at QB 2013 and realized that it had taken a giant step backwards from the level of accessibility in 2012. Menu's and highlight bars were no longer accessible and some user interface areas had been implemented that Jaws couldn't even read from the screen. Unfortunately, these changes were a deliberate shift in the user interface for usability reasons that just happened to have a significant negative impact on screen reader users.

We started compiling a list of must-fix items, basically the things that needed to be done to give the screen reader any chance of figuring out what was going on in the QuickBooks program. Together with Intuit, My Blind Spot's team of professionals made the necessary accessibility changes to the core platform of the program, while making certain the accessibility changes did not break core functionality of Quickbooks or interfere with internal Quality Assurance processes for those consumers who have been using QuickBooks for 20 years or more.

We identified 6-10 major problems and started working on them. We have been able to fix most of the major roadblocks but there are still a few nagging glitches left for us to work on for 2015 and beyond. The current version of QuickBooks for windows, comprised of Pro, Premiere and Enterprise, is the most usable and accessible version in all of Intuit's history, and with more accessibility fixes anticipated in Quickbooks 2015, we expect higher levels of usability and functionality for those of us dependent on assistive technologies. We already have a list of fixes set

as priorities for 2015, but again, we have to remain cognizant of how the changes effect the product overall prior to making any definitive changes to the core platform.

Here are a list of our goals and intentions for this effort, which will outline what we have done, and what we propose to do.

1. Our first goal was to restore as much functionality as possible back to QB 2012 levels.
2. Implement programmatic changes that provided the necessary hooks that a screen reader requires to interface properly with what's happening on the screen. In other words, get better access than 2012 and definitely better then 2013.
3. Prioritize changes that had the widest reach and universal impact within Quickbooks.
4. Focus on fixes that impact the most common areas of day-to-day usage, primarily customer and vendor screens.

This means that there are still features in QuickBooks that remain less accessible to screen readers that could not be addressed in QB 2014. The most prominent of these areas include New Company Setup, Payroll, and the Help Screens as well as other areas. Our priorities are to concentrate on those areas that people will use on a daily basis, then move out from there.

Anything that could not be address in the standard development cycles followed by Intuit have been

addressed, to the best of our ability, with the JAWS scripts we created and the educational materials we developed to compliment the newly accessible program. We will continue following the same prioritization strategy for the work now commencing for QuickBooks 2015. Priorities will be to fix general areas in the features most used by day-to-day users and from there, expand to less commonly used features that need attention.

For additional information regarding pricing, educational materials, and training, or if you are interested in a tandem session to experience firsthand the usability that has been reintroduced back to the product, write us at info@myblindspot.org. Those of you interested in purchasing the accessible version of QuickBooks for Windows can go to the MBS store by visiting the link below and purchasing everything you need from our website. Every purchase made through My Blind Spot goes to help fund the necessary work to open those virtual doors that have been locked to the blind and visually impaired communities in the past.

At My Blind Spot we believe access to the right tools promotes ability and restores infinite possibilities.

http://myblindspot.org/quickbooks/quickbooks_jaws_scripts.php/