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The Bait and Switch Stops Here: TaxAct Rolls Out its Online 2016 Free Edition without Hidden Fees or Obscure Upgrades

With TaxAct Online Free Edition, filers with simple tax situations pay \$0 to prepare and file federal and state returns, get all-access to phone support and robust resources previously available to paid filers only

CEDAR RAPIDS, IA -- (Marketwired) -- 12/08/16 -- [TaxAct](#) today announced hard-working Americans can once again file no-cost federal and state income tax returns using TaxAct's Online 2016 Free Edition -- no small print required. Millions of Americans who file simple federal (1040 EZ/A) and state returns online can do so for free with TaxAct, the leader in affordable digital and download tax preparation solutions. Users will be happy to note the product is free of something else too: hidden fees and upgrades. [TaxAct Online 2016 Free Edition](#) won't charge filers for obscure in-product upgrades, instead offering services including phone support and access to prior-year TaxAct returns absolutely free of charge. Using these services might add value, but they won't add any costs.

"Bait and switch tactics have become a common pattern in the do-it-yourself (DIY) online tax preparation industry. It is not customer-friendly to lure filers in with a free message only to force an upgrade for features they would expect in the free product," said Rob Gettemy, TaxAct chief operating officer. "This year, we're changing the pattern. We are committed to transparent pricing so tax filers with simple returns know when we say free, we mean it."

TaxAct customers will know -- up front -- what they'll get with the Online Free Edition. In addition, TaxAct makes it very clear what a filer will pay if they do not qualify for the free product.

Gettemy added, "Filers who start a free return but later realize their tax situation is more complex, will need to upgrade to a paid TaxAct product. We're up front about that. For added convenience, filers can elect to import their prior-year TaxAct return for one flat fee -- a change from last year, when filers had to upgrade to a higher priced product for the same feature."

The improved TaxAct Online Free Edition now includes:

- 1 **Phone support** -- Filers can contact TaxAct's team of trained tax professionals via phone for tax and technical help at no additional charge -- an added value not included in the leading competitor's free product.
- 1 **Prior-year online return access** -- For the first time, customers can access up to three years of prior-year TaxAct online returns and tax-related information for no additional fee. Year-round access makes it easy for TaxAct customers to provide their prior year return(s) when they face various life acts that require that information -- like getting a mortgage. This is yet another feature for which the leading competitor requires an upgrade to a paid product.
- 1 **Guidance for life changes and related tax implications** -- TaxAct Life Events alerts customers to important information related to various life changes and the impact on their taxes. Buying a home or getting married, for example, can change a filer's tax situation. TaxAct Online Free Edition customers now have access to all 19 TaxAct Life Events, an expansion of the two Life Events offered last year.

No obscure upgrade to import last year's data

TaxAct Online Free Edition customers can transfer information from last year's TaxAct return into their current return for a flat fee of \$5. In the past, filers who qualified for TaxAct Online Free Edition had to upgrade to a higher-priced paid product, TaxAct Basic, to gain the efficiencies of import. As evidence of the company's commitment to providing products and pricing that are free from hidden fees and obscure upgrades, it has eliminated the TaxAct Basic product. Instead of upgrading to a higher priced product to import prior-year tax data, customers can simply pay a low, one-time fee.

Change to TaxAct with Ease to Avoid the Bait and Switch

Despite common misconceptions, making a change from another DIY tax software provider to TaxAct is an easy transition. Filers can simply export their prior-year return prepared by other major DIY tax software providers into a Portable Document Format (PDF) file. TaxAct will import the information, making it virtually seamless to begin this year's return with your new partner in DIY tax preparation.

Price Lock Guarantee Promises Pricing Transparency

TaxAct guarantees customers using any of TaxAct's online products will pay the price listed for that product at the time they started their return, no matter when they file. Filers often need more time to complete their tax return and shouldn't face higher fees after starting a return only to file later in the season. Even if a TaxAct Free Online Edition customer starts their simple return at the beginning of tax season but doesn't finish until closer to the filing deadline, they'll still pay nothing to e-file and print their federal and state returns. TaxAct is one of the only major online tax software providers to offer a Price Lock Guarantee, and serves as another example of the company's commitment not to bait and switch its customers.

TaxAct also continues to provide its long-standing Maximum Refund Pledge as well as its Accuracy and Satisfaction Guarantees.

**All prices subject to change.*

About TaxAct

TaxAct is a leading provider of affordable digital and download tax software for individuals, business owners and tax professionals. The company's mission is to empower people to navigate the complexities of tax and finance with ease and accuracy -- at a clear, transparent and fair price. As evidence of its commitment to transparent pricing, TaxAct has long-offered a Price Lock Guarantee that ensures its customers pay the price listed for their selected online product at the time they started their return, no matter when they file. TaxAct was one of the top three visited online tax preparation destinations last tax season¹ and has assisted with approximately 65 million e-filed federal returns since 2000. To learn more about TaxAct, a business of Blucora, Inc. (NASDAQ: BCOR), visit www.TaxAct.com or connect with us on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#).

¹ According to collective week end reports for taxact.com released by SimilarWeb Ltd.

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