

## *ProEst Estimating Software by Construction Management Software*

**Overall Rating** **8.0****Product Name**ProEst Estimating  
Software by Construction  
Management Software**Reviewed By**

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**Summary**

ProEst Estimating is a robust software package that offers contractors the flexibility and functionality to adapt the program to their individual requirements. Since it is based on a Microsoft platform, it integrates with many popular programs including QuickBooks and Microsoft Project, and it is easy to navigate since it operates on familiar Windows-based commands. Because the program offers so many features and modules, I would recommend a new user take advantage of the training options available to better utilize the full capabilities of the program.

**Strengths**

One of the most notable features is the program's ability to integrate with various industry applications including scheduling software, CAD systems, and third party pricing databases. The program is also backed by a friendly, knowledgeable staff with over 28 year's experience. Additionally, a new user could start estimating within a matter of minutes due to the user-friendly interface and built-in item database.

**Limitations**

Although ProEst is a powerful estimating program, the user must purchase a separate scheduling program to assist with managing a project's resources and tracking cash flow.

**Wish List**

I would love to see an on-line version of the software offered to eliminate the need for users to install updates and maintain general databases. More time could be spent on creating accurate estimates rather than worrying if the database items had been recently updated. Additionally, the user could access the software anywhere an internet connection was available without having to install the program.



Product Ratings	Rating
<p><b>Setup and Installation:</b> The installation of the program is very easy. Once the CD is inserted, it brings up a menu with various options for installing the product. There are three levels of the program available to install, as well as various database options and a digitizer module. The menu also includes a short demo with a general overview of the product. The installation guide fails to mention whether you should disable your computer's anti-virus software prior to installing; however, I recommend you add this step to speed up the installation. After the product is installed, you are ready to activate your license by calling the registration number provided. Once activated, the product is ready to use. No additional setup is required to begin estimating.</p>	9.0
<p><b>Interface:</b> As mentioned earlier, the program navigates with a Windows-based interface. You can double-click to select items and view details. There are seven menus of commands including File, Tools, Window and Help. Many of the commands available such as print preview, add and delete are familiar to most Windows users. There is a toolbar with icons of commonly used features to aid with navigation. There is also a control center where a user can access most of the important functions contained in the program. Overall, the interface is friendly and allows a new user to feel comfortable navigating the program in a short period of time.</p>	8.5
<p><b>Features:</b> An accurate estimate is essential for contractors to acquire projects and ensure profitability. ProEst can generate estimates almost immediately upon installation by utilizing the general database of items included with the program. To reflect current costs, the takeoff items can also be linked to various industry databases available for purchase including RS Means which is updated twice a year. To facilitate the estimating process, the database items can be grouped into assemblies that are calculated by preset or user-defined formulas. This allows the estimator to quickly add related groups of items to an estimate based on the assembly selected. The program also offers a digitizer module which allows the user to calculate lengths, areas and counts based on digitized images. Depending on the version selected, the program can generate up to 70 standard reports and user-defined custom reports.</p>	8.9
<p><b>Follow-through on Claims</b> Some of the claims that ProEst advertises are the increased speed and efficiency acquired when estimating, seamless integration with leading accounting and scheduling programs, and ease of use. After 28 years of fine tuning the software based on user recommendations, CMS has done an excellent job of providing users with a product that stands up to its claims.</p>	8.5

**Ratings Definitions**

- 10.0 (Perfect):**  
This is a very rare score is reserved for a product that is as perfect as it could be.
- 9.0 to 9.9 (Spectacular):**  
A product that receives a rating in this range succeeds at meeting all of its intended users' needs and has no major drawbacks.
- 8.0 to 8.9 (Excellent):**  
A product that receives a rating in this range is superior in so many ways that its few drawbacks do not have much negative impact.
- 7.0 to 7.9 (Very good):**  
While the strengths of a product scoring in this range certainly outweigh its weaknesses, it has some minor faults that users should be aware of.
- 6.0 to 6.9 (Good):**  
This range represents a product that is above average. Its strengths outweigh its weaknesses, making it good for most uses but not a standout.
- 5.0 to 5.9 (Average):**  
A product that scores in this range is functional but unremarkable.
- 4.0 to 4.9 (Mediocre):**  
Products in this range are below average. They fall in the middle of the pack for most features, but suffer from a few additional major flaws.
- 3.0 to 3.9 (Poor):**  
A customer should probably not consider purchasing a product in this range or lower. There may be one or two specialized circumstances, however, that could justify the purchase of this product for a very low price for a specific demand.



### Ease of Use/Service and Support

Overall, the software is easy to use. An estimator could begin using the program immediately, but to fully utilize the available features, the user should plan on taking one of the available training options which include web-based, on-site, and quarterly classes. There is also an on-line meeting center for training purposes.

Service plans are available for an annual fee ranging in price from \$99.95 to \$299.95 depending on the level of software purchased. All program updates and unlimited technical support are included with the plan. A user can choose web-based, phone or e-mail support options. CMS also offers a 30 day money back guarantee on their product.

8.9

### Data Security

If a network version of the program is purchased, the administrator has the ability to setup user log-ins and limit user access. An estimator can be setup to only edit the estimates he creates and the items and costs associated with that estimate. This could prevent one estimator from accidentally updating a cost on another user's estimate. If you purchase a single user edition, no log-in information is required and anyone could access the database and inadvertently edit an estimate.

7.5

### Privacy

This product does not have a stated privacy policy.

5.0

### Integration with QuickBooks

The integration with QuickBooks is not completely seamless, but with a few minor modifications your data can be accurately imported. The help menu within ProEst could provide more detailed explanations the available options have on the QuickBooks data file during export. I discovered that by importing my QuickBooks chart of accounts, customer and vendor lists into ProEst first, the whole process worked better. The only minor issue I encountered after the transfer into ProEst was the customer and vendor addresses did not transfer from QuickBooks. Once I exported the estimate to QuickBooks, I had to edit the service items created to allow input of the expense account for purchases. Once the items are setup with expense and income accounts, the integration process works very well.

7.9