A WIP MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a WIP management system for managing work in progress (WIP) financial amounts, for example in a professional services business.

Background of the Invention

In a professional services business, for example an accounting, law or patent attorney business, it is common practice for individuals to charge clients for time spent working on matters associated with the clients, and in this sense the time spent is a saleable commodity. Ordinarily, the time spent on a matter by an individual is recorded in an accounting system as work in progress (WIP) and the total WIP recorded by all individuals in the business therefore represents potential income for the business. WIP also typically includes disbursements incurred by a business. At the end of a periodic time interval, a decision is typically made as to whether to bill a client all, a portion of, or none of the WIP that has been recorded for a matter.

However, the process of reviewing and making a decision in relation to the WIP associated with each client matter is cumbersome and time consuming.

Summary of the Invention

In this specification, an individual that spends time on matters and charges clients for time spent is referred to as a 'timekeeper'.

In this specification, work in progress (WIP) represents financial amounts that are at least potentially chargeable

to a client and may include time that has been spent working on a matter associated with a client and that represents a charge based on the amount of time spent; disbursement charges that may include official government fees and charges incurred with other businesses; and scale charges that relate to defined financial amounts that are chargeable to a client for carrying out a defined service.

In accordance with a first aspect of the present invention, there is provided a WIP management system comprising:

a data storage device arranged to store work in progress (WIP) data indicative of work in progress financial amounts associated with at least one person; and

a filter arranged to facilitate filtering of the WIP data according to received criteria so as to produce filtered WIP data;

the system being arranged to facilitate display of filtered WIP information indicative of the filtered WIP data, to facilitate selection by a user of WIP from the filtered WIP information and to instigate invoice processing based on the selected WIP.

In an embodiment, WIP data is stored in a primary database associated with an accounting system, and the system includes a secondary database and a data extractor arranged to extract a sub-set of WIP data from the primary database for storage in the secondary database, the filter being arranged to filter the WIP data stored in the secondary database according to the received criteria. The sub-set of WIP data may correspond to current WIP data.

In an embodiment, the WIP management system includes a data updater arranged to synchronise the sub-set of WIP data stored in the secondary database with the WIP data stored in the primary database.

In an embodiment, the system is separate to and interfaceable with an accounting system, for example through an application programming interface (API) associated with the accounting system.

In an alternative embodiment, the system is incorporated into an accounting system, for example as a software plug-in or add-on.

In an embodiment, the filter is arranged to facilitate filtering of the WIP data according to any one or more of:

the amount of a WIP entry;
the timekeeper associated with a WIP entry;
the client associated with a WIP entry; and/or
the age of a WIP entry.

In an embodiment, the system is arranged to communicate with at least one computing device through a communications network, such as the Internet and/or an intranet.

In an embodiment, the system includes a web server arranged to serve at least one web page to at least one computing device on request, the at least one web page being usable to facilitate reception of filter criteria and display of the filtered WIP information.

In an embodiment, the system is arranged to facilitate editing of WIP data by editing the displayed WIP information corresponding to the WIP data.

In an embodiment, the system is arranged to display filtered WIP records, each WIP record associated with different WIP data, and to facilitate selection of at least one WIP record.

In an embodiment, each WIP record is associated with one client matter.

In an embodiment, the system is arranged to facilitate selection of multiple WIP records and to instigate creation of a prebill for each selected WIP record.

In an embodiment, the system is arranged to facilitate simultaneous modification of WIP data for all selected WIP records, for example so as to modify the WIP data of each selected WIP record to a zero financial amount.

In an embodiment, the system is arranged to facilitate invoice processing by facilitating display of prebill details indicative of a prebill.

In an embodiment, the system is arranged to instigate invoice processing by instigating creation of at least one prebill based on the selected WIP.

In accordance with a second aspect of the present invention, there is provided a WIP management system comprising:

a data storage device arranged to store work in progress (WIP) data indicative of work in progress financial amounts associated with at least one person;

the system being arranged to facilitate display of WIP information indicative of the WIP data, to facilitate selection by a user of WIP from the WIP information, and to facilitate display of prebill details indicative of a prebill based on the selected WIP.

In an embodiment, the displayed prebill details are editable.

In an embodiment, the system is arranged to selectively display a WIP screen including a plurality of matter

records and WIP information associated with each matter record, or a prebill screen including a plurality of prebill records, each prebill record associated with a prebill and one client matter.

In an embodiment, the system is arranged such that selection of a prebill record causes prebill details to be displayed, the prebill details including WIP information associated with the prebill.

In an embodiment, the system is arranged to facilitate approval of a prebill by a user and in response to approval of the prebill to instigate approval of the prebill in an accounting system.

In accordance with a third aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method of managing work in progress (WIP), the method comprising:

storing work in progress (WIP) data indicative of work in progress financial amounts associated with at least one person;

receiving criteria for filtering of the WIP data so as to produce filtered WIP data;

displaying filtered WIP information indicative of the filtered WIP data;

receiving selection by a user of WIP from the filtered WIP information; and

instigating invoice processing based on the selected WIP.

Brief Description of the Drawings

The present invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a diagrammatic representation of a WIP management system in accordance with an embodiment of the

present invention;

Figure 2 is a schematic block diagram of hardware components used to implement the WIP management system shown in Figure 1 with the hardware components shown in relation to a plurality of user devices;

Figures 3 and 4 are diagrammatic representations of a WIP screen produced by the WIP management system shown in Figure 1; and

Figure 5 is a diagrammatic representation of a prebill screen produced by the WIP management system shown in Figure 1.

Description of an Embodiment of the Invention

Referring to Figures 1 and 2 of the drawings, there is shown a WIP management system 10 arranged to facilitate management of work in progress (WIP) financial amounts by timekeepers, for example associated with a business, and in particular that enables WIP to be reviewed and decisions in relation to the WIP to be made more easily.

The system 10 in this example is arranged to interface with an accounting system 12 arranged to manage recordal and billing of WIP.

In this example, the system 10 is associated with and used by a professional services business, such as a law, accounting or patent attorney business, although it will be understood that the system 10 is applicable to any business wherein at least one individual in the business provides a service and charges for time spent providing the service.

In this example, the accounting system 12 is part of a professional services management system arranged to manage all financial related aspects of operating a business, such as debtors, creditors, timekeeper budgets, and so on,

in addition to managing WIP. The accounting system 12 includes an accounting application 13, an associated application programming interface (API) 14 arranged to facilitate communication between the accounting application 13 and the WIP management system 10, and a primary database 16 in which accounting data, including WIP related data, is stored.

In the present embodiment, the primary database 16 is a relational database that includes one or more tables appropriately linked so as to efficiently store information necessary for managing WIP data, although it will be understood that any suitable data storage arrangement is envisaged.

In the present embodiment, the WIP management system 10 is separate to and interfaceable with the accounting system 12. However, it will be understood that the WIP management system 10 may alternatively be incorporated into the accounting system 12, or more generally into a professional services management system, for example as a software add-on or plug-in.

The WIP management system 10 includes a filter, in this example implemented as a filter software process 20, arranged to enable a user to enter WIP criteria to be used to filter the WIP data stored in the primary database 16. In the present example, the WIP criteria include the amount of a WIP entry, the timekeeper associated with a WIP entry, the client associated with a WIP entry, and/or the age of WIP entry, although it will be understood that any other suitable criteria are envisaged.

The WIP management system 10 also includes a data extractor 22 arranged to extract WIP data defined by the entered WIP criteria from the primary database 16 by communicating data extraction commands to the accounting

application 13 through the API 14. The extracted data is stored in a secondary database 24.

As an alternative to extracting WIP data defined by the entered WIP criteria from the primary database 16 for storage in the secondary database, the data extractor 22 may be arranged to first extract a subset of WIP data from the primary database 16 for storage in the secondary database, for example only WIP data that is current or created within a defined time period. The data extractor 22 would then extract WIP data defined by the entered criteria from the WIP data stored in the secondary database. In this way, searching and data extraction according to the defined criteria is relatively quick and efficient because a relatively small amount of WIP data compared to the total WIP data in the primary database 16 is required to be searched.

The WIP management system 10 also includes a WIP manager 26 arranged to cause filtered WIP data defined by the entered criteria to be displayed to a user, facilitate editing and manipulation of the filtered WIP data, and instigate creation of prebills from the filtered WIP data.

The WIP management system 10 also includes a prebill manager 28 arranged to cause prebill data to be displayed to a user, and facilitate editing, manipulation and approval of the prebill data.

If changes or additions are made to the WIP data and/or the prebill data, the changes and/or additions are stored in the secondary database 24.

The WIP management system 10 also includes a data updater 30 arranged to synchronise the WIP data and prebill data stored in the secondary database 24 with the WIP data and prebill data stored in the primary database 16 so that

changes and additions made to the WIP data and prebill data using the WIP manager 26 and/or prebill manager 28 also flow through to the WIP data and prebill data stored in the primary database 16.

In this way, the secondary database 24 is used as a temporary storage arrangement for WIP and prebill data so that actions can be carried out quickly in relation to the WIP and prebill data.

In this example, the primary 16 and secondary 24 databases are SQL type databases provided with appropriate database management software, although it will be understood that any suitable database arrangement is envisaged.

In this example, the filter process 20, the data extractor 22, the WIP manager 26, the prebill manager 28 and the data updater are implemented as software processes by a suitable computing system, although it will be understood that other arrangements are possible.

In this example, the WIP management system 10 and the accounting system 12 are implemented using at least one computing device. An example architecture 40 suitable for implementing the WIP management system 10 and the accounting system 12 is shown in Figure 2.

In this example, the architecture 40 corresponds to a computer server that is accessible on-line from a remote location through a communications network such as the Internet 42 and/or an intranet using any suitable communications enabled computing device 44. In this embodiment, the computing devices 44 are in the form of personal computers, each of which is associated with a timekeeper or user that has responsibility for managing WIP on behalf of one or more timekeepers.

While the present embodiment includes personal computers 44 arranged to interact with the system 10, it will be understood that any communications enabled device capable of communicating with the system is envisaged, such as a mobile phone, PDA or tablet computer.

The architecture 40 includes a control unit 46, in this example a processor, arranged to control and coordinate system operations, in particular to coordinate communications between the system 10 and the accounting system 12; a data storage device 48 for storing information and programs used by the control unit 46; and a memory 50 for temporarily storing data and/or programs that are implemented by the control unit 46 during use.

The architecture 40 in this example also includes a web server 52 arranged to serve web pages including WIP information and/or prebill information to the computing devices 44 on request, and to receive information from a user including WIP criteria that is to form the basis of a filter request and/or changes to WIP and prebill data.

Referring to Figures 3 to 5, representations of screens served to the computing devices 44 during use by the web server 52 are shown.

In the present example, the WIP management system 10 is implemented as a software add-on to an accounting system 12 that forms part of a general professional services management system. During the course of operating a business of the type wherein individual timekeepers charge clients for time spent on client matters, time spent on matters, scale charges associated with matters, and disbursements associated with matters are recorded in the accounting system 12 as work in progress (WIP). At least some of the recorded WIP is used by the accounting system 12 to create prebills and ultimately bills that are sent

to clients.

The present WIP management system 10 enables people associated with a business to efficiently review, modify and instigate prebill creation.

A user desiring to review and/or modify WIP recorded by the accounting system 12 in the primary database 16 operates a computing device 44 in order to cause a WIP screen 60 to be displayed, as shown in Figure 3. In this example, the WIP screen 60 is presented to the user in a web browser 61, with information indicative of the WIP screen 60 being served to the user computing device 44 by the web server 52, for example in HTML format.

The WIP screen 60 displays WIP information indicative of WIP data, in this example based on current WIP data that has been extracted from the primary database 16 and stored in the secondary database 24. The WIP screen 60 includes a filter criteria section 62 usable to enter WIP criteria to form the basis of a filter search through WIP data stored in the secondary database 24. In this example, the filter criteria section 62 includes a minimum WIP amount selector usable to select the minimum total WIP recorded against a matter; a zero writedown checkbox that, when selected, causes all WIP amounts that have been changed to zero amounts to be extracted; a fee earner drop down box usable to select one or more timekeepers; a client drop down box usable to select one or more clients; and a minimum WIP age selector usable to select the minimum WIP age. However, it will be understood that any other suitable filters may be used, such as a matter reference drop down box usable to select one or more matters.

After the desired WIP criteria is selected by the user, the matters with WIP that satisfy the WIP criteria are displayed as one or more matter records 64.

Each matter record 64 includes a selection checkbox 66 usable to select the matter record, scale charge information 70 indicative of the total amount of scale recorded on the matter, disbursement information 72 indicative of the total disbursements recorded on the matter, service charge information 74 indicative of the total time based charges recorded on the matter, and total WIP information 76 indicative of the sum of the scale charge information 70, disbursement information 72, and service charge information 74.

As shown in Figure 4, when a matter record 64 is selected, for example using a mouse, the scale charge information 70, disbursement information 72, and service charge information 74 expand to show individual scale, disbursement and/or service charge entries. Each of the individual entries includes a date field 78, a timekeeper code 80 unique to the timekeeper responsible for the entry, an item code 82 indicative of the type of entry, for example the type of scale charge or type of disbursement, and the amount 84 of the entry.

The information shown on the WIP screen 60 and associated with each matter record 64 is directly editable, in this example by clicking on the relevant information in the matter record using a mouse and entering the desired new information using a keyboard. Amendment of the information in a matter record 64 in this way causes the WIP data stored in the secondary database 24 to be updated and ultimately the corresponding WIP data stored in the primary database 16 to also be updated.

WIP records of interest can be filtered from the displayed WIP records 64 using the selection check boxes 66. A user is then able to toggle between display of all WIP records that satisfy the filter criteria or only the selected WIP

records 64 using WIP toggle buttons 86, 88.

The WIP screen 60 also includes a zero writedown button 90 that when activated causes the recorded WIP on all WIP records 64 selected using the selection check boxes 66 to be written down to zero. This facilitates swift removal of selected WIP amounts simultaneously from the secondary database 24 and ultimately from the primary database 16.

A client sort button 92 enables the matter records 64 to be sorted by client in alphabetical or reverse alphabetical order.

The WIP screen 60 also includes a prebill button 94 that when activated causes information indicative of a prebill to be created based on each matter record that has been selected by a user using the selection check boxes 66. The created prebill information is stored in the secondary database 24 and is ultimately also stored in the primary database 16 when the information in the secondary database 24 is synchronized with the information in the primary database 16.

The WIP screen 60 also includes an export selected button 96 usable to export information indicative of matter records 64 that have been selected using the selection check boxes 66, for example to a spreadsheet or word processing type file; an export all button 97 usable to export information indicative of all matter records 64; a select page button 98 usable to effect selection of all matter records 64; a deselect page button 100 usable to clear all selection check boxes 66; an expand page button 102 usable to cause all matter records 64 to expand so as to display individual scale, disbursement and/or service charge entries for each matter record 64; and a collapse page button 104 usable to cause all matter records 64 to collapse.

The WIP screen 60 also includes a WIP screen navigation button 120 that when activated causes the WIP screen 60 to be displayed, and a prebill screen navigation button 122 that when activated causes a prebill screen 130 as shown in Figure 5 to be displayed.

The WIP screen 60 also includes a WIP summary section 124 that displays total amounts for scale charges, disbursement charges and service charges for all matter records that satisfy the entered filter criteria, and that also displays the total scale charges, disbursement charges and service charges for the WIP records that have been selected using the selection check boxes 66.

The prebill screen 130 shows prebill records 132 indicative of prebill information that has been created using the WIP screen 60. Each prebill record 132 includes client information 134; a matter identifier 136; timekeeper information 138; a service charge amount 140, if any; a disbursement amount 142, if any; a scale charge amount 144, if any; and a total charges amount 146.

Selection of a prebill record 132, for example using a mouse, causes prebill details 150 associated with the selected prebill record 132 to be displayed. The prebill details 150 include services details 152, disbursement details 154 and scale details 156, each of which shows each individual service, disbursement or scale item separately. The prebill details 150 also include a prebill narrative box 158 usable to enter an appropriate narrative for a prebill.

As with the WIP screen 60, each individual service, disbursement or scale item in the respective services details 152, disbursement details 154 and scale details 156 sections is directly editable, in this example by

clicking on the relevant information using a mouse and entering the desired new information using a keyboard. Amendment of the information in this way causes the prebill data stored in the secondary database 24 to be updated and ultimately the corresponding prebill data stored in the primary database 16 to also be updated.

The prebill screen 130 also includes an approve prebill button 160 usable to cause a mark to be added to the created prebill to indicate that the prebill has been approved by the responsible timekeeper. A disapprove prebill button 162 is also included to allow a timekeeper to add a mark to a prebill to indicate that the prebill is not yet approved by the timekeeper.

The prebill screen also includes a reset prebill button 164 usable to cause changes made to the prebill details 150 to be reversed, and discount boxes 166 usable to apply a discount to service charges and/or scale charges in a prebill.

During use, time spent on matters by a timekeeper is entered into the accounting system 12 in any suitable way by the timekeeper or by a person authorized to enter time on behalf of the timekeeper, and WIP data corresponding to the entered time is created in the primary database 16 by the accounting system 12.

Scale charges and disbursement charges associated with a matter are also entered into the accounting system 12 in any suitable way by the timekeeper or by a person authorized to enter scale and disbursement charges, and WIP data corresponding to the entered scale and/or disbursement charge is created in the primary database 16 by the accounting system 12.

The data extractor 22 extracts WIP data from the primary

database that represents current WIP data and stores the extracted WIP data in the secondary database 24.

At periodic time intervals, at the end of each month, or at any other time, the timekeeper uses a web browser 61 to display the WIP screen 60 shown in Figures 3 and 4, and uses the filter criteria 62 on the WIP screen 60 to select a sub-set of the WIP data stored in the secondary database 24. For example, the user may choose to select only WIP data that is more than 150 days old, that is greater than $1,000 for an individual matter, and so on.

Based on the entered filter criteria, the data extractor 22 extracts WIP data that satisfies the entered filter criteria and the WIP manager 26 causes the filtered WIP data to be displayed on the WIP screen 60, as shown in Figure 3.

Using the WIP screen 60, the user is able to quickly select WIP that is to be written down to zero, to modify WIP amounts, and/or instigate creation of prebill data from selected WIP. The user is also able to view WIP summary information, including total scale, disbursement and service charge amounts for all matters associated with the filtered WIP data, and total scale, disbursement and service charge amounts for selected matters.

Modifications and/or additions made to the WIP data are stored in the secondary database 24 and subsequently stored in the primary database 16 by the data updater 30. For example, the data updater 30 may be arranged to periodically synchronise the WIP data and prebill data stored in the secondary database 24 with the corresponding WIP data and prebill data stored in the primary database 16.

Using the prebill screen 130, the user is able to view the

prebill data that has been created and stored in the primary and secondary databases 16, 24, modify the prebill data, and approve or disapprove the prebill data.

Modifications and/or additions made to the prebill data are stored in the secondary database 24 and subsequently stored in the primary database by the data updater 30.

It will be appreciated that the system may be arranged such that each user has an associated user profile that defines the types of actions that the user is authorized to carry out. For example, only a defined group of authorized user may be authorized to write down WIP amounts, cancel prebills and invoices, and so on.

It will be appreciated that the present WIP management system enables WIP to be easily managed and converted to prebills, and also reduces the time required to review and approve prebills.

Modifications and variations as would be apparent to a skilled addressee are deemed to be within the scope of the present invention.

CLAIMS:

1. A WIP management system comprising:

a data storage device arranged to store work in progress (WIP) data indicative of work in progress financial amounts associated with at least one person; and

a filter arranged to facilitate filtering of the WIP data according to received criteria so as to produce filtered WIP data;

the system being arranged to facilitate display of filtered WIP information indicative of the filtered WIP data, to facilitate selection by a user of WIP from the filtered WIP information and to instigate invoice processing based on the selected WIP.

2. A WIP management system as claimed in claim 1, wherein WIP data is stored in a primary database associated with an accounting system, and the system includes a secondary database and a data extractor arranged to extract a sub-set of WIP data from the primary database for storage in the secondary database, the filter being arranged to filter the WIP data stored in the secondary database according to the received criteria.

3. A WIP management system as claimed in claim 2, wherein the sub-set of WIP data corresponds to current WIP data.

4. A WIP management system as claimed in claim 2 or claim 3, wherein the WIP management system includes a data updater arranged to synchronise the sub-set of WIP data stored in the secondary database with the WIP data stored in the primary database.

5. A WIP management system as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the system is separate to and interfaceable with an accounting system.

6. A WIP management system as claimed in claim 5, wherein the system is interfaceable with an accounting system through an application programming interface (API) associated with the accounting system.

7. A WIP management system as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the system is incorporated into an accounting system.

8. A WIP management system as claimed in claim 7, wherein the system is incorporated into an accounting system as a software plug-in or add-on.

9. A WIP management system as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the filter is arranged to facilitate filtering of the WIP data according to any one or more of:

the amount of a WIP entry;
the timekeeper associated with a WIP entry;
the client associated with a WIP entry; and/or
the age of a WIP entry.

10. A WIP management system as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the system is arranged to communicate with at least one computing device through a communications network.

11. A WIP management system as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the system includes a web server arranged to serve at least one web page to at least one computing device on request, the at least one web page being usable to facilitate reception of filter criteria and display of the filtered WIP information.

12. A WIP management system as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the system is arranged to

facilitate editing of WIP data by editing the displayed WIP information corresponding to the WIP data.

13. A WIP management system as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the system is arranged to display filtered WIP records, each WIP record associated with different WIP data, and to facilitate selection of at least one WIP record.

14. A WIP management system as claimed in claim 13, wherein each WIP record is associated with one client matter.

15. A WIP management system as claimed in claim 13 or claim 14, wherein the system is arranged to facilitate selection of multiple WIP records by a user and to instigate invoice processing for each selected WIP record.

16. A WIP management system as claimed in claim 15, wherein the system is arranged to facilitate simultaneous modification of WIP data for all selected WIP records.

17. A WIP management system as claimed in claim 16, wherein the system is arranged to facilitate simultaneous modification of WIP data for all selected WIP records so as to modify the WIP data of each selected WIP record to a zero financial amount.

18. A WIP management system as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the system is arranged to facilitate invoice processing by facilitating display of prebill details indicative of a prebill.

19. A WIP management system as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the system is arranged to instigate invoice processing by instigating creation of at least one prebill based on the selected WIP.

20. A WIP management system as claimed in claim 18 or claim 19, wherein the displayed prebill details are editable.

21. A WIP management system as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the system is arranged to selectively display a WIP screen including a plurality of matter records and WIP information associated with each matter record, or a prebill screen including a plurality of prebill records, each prebill record associated with a prebill and one client matter.

22. A WIP management system as claimed in claim 21, wherein the system is arranged such that selection of a prebill record causes prebill details to be displayed, the prebill details including WIP information associated with the prebill.

23. A WIP management system as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the system is arranged to facilitate approval of a prebill by a user and in response to approval of the prebill to instigate approval of the prebill in an accounting system.

24. A WIP management system as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the system is arranged such that each user associated with the system has an associated user profile indicative of the types of actions that the user is authorized to carry out.

25. A WIP management system comprising:

a data storage device arranged to store work in progress (WIP) data indicative of work in progress financial amounts associated with at least one person;

the system being arranged to facilitate display of WIP information indicative of the WIP data, to facilitate

selection by a user of WIP from the WIP information, and to facilitate display of prebill details indicative of a prebill based on the selected WIP.

26. A method of managing work in progress (WIP), the method comprising:

storing work in progress (WIP) data indicative of work in progress financial amounts associated with at least one person;

receiving criteria for filtering of the WIP data;

filtering the WIP data according to the received criteria so as to produce filtered WIP data;

displaying filtered WIP information indicative of the filtered WIP data;

receiving selection by a user of WIP from the filtered WIP information; and

instigating invoice processing based on the selected WIP.

27. A method as claimed in claim 26, comprising storing WIP data in a primary database associated with an accounting system, extracting a sub-set of WIP data from the primary database, and storing the extracted WIP data in a secondary database, wherein the step of filtering the WIP data comprises filtering the WIP data stored in the secondary database according to the received criteria.

28. A method as claimed in claim 27, wherein the sub-set of WIP data corresponds to current WIP data.

29. A method as claimed in claim 27 or claim 28, comprising synchronising the sub-set of WIP data stored in the secondary database with the WIP data stored in the primary database.

30. A method as claimed in any one of claims 26 to 29, wherein the filtering criteria includes any one or more

of:

the amount of a WIP entry;
the timekeeper associated with a WIP entry;
the client associated with a WIP entry; and/or
the age of a WIP entry.

31. A method as claimed in any one of claims 26 to 30, comprising communicating with at least one computing device through a communications network, the computing device operable by a user to display the filtered WIP information and select WIP from the filtered WIP information.

32. A method system as claimed in any one of claims 26 to 30, comprising serving at least one web page to at least one computing device on request, the at least one web page being usable to receiving filter criteria and display the filtered WIP information.

33. A method as claimed in any one of claims 26 to 32, comprising facilitating editing of WIP data by editing the displayed WIP information corresponding to the WIP data.

34. A method as claimed in any one of claims 26 to 33, comprising displaying filtered WIP records, each WIP record associated with different WIP data, and facilitating selection by a user of at least one WIP record.

35. A method as claimed in claim 34, wherein each WIP record is associated with one client matter.

36. A method as claimed in claim 34 or claim 35, comprising facilitating selection of multiple WIP records by a user and instigating invoice processing for each selected WIP record.

37. A method as claimed in claim 36, comprising facilitating simultaneous modification of WIP data for all selected WIP records.

38. A method as claimed in claim 37, comprising facilitating simultaneous modification of WIP data for all selected WIP records so as to modify the WIP data of each selected WIP record to a zero financial amount.

39. A method as claimed in any one of claims 26 to 37, comprising instigating invoice processing by instigating creation of at least one prebill based on the selected WIP.

40. A method as claimed in claim 38 or claim 39, wherein the displayed prebill details are editable.

41. A method as claimed in any one of claims 26 to 40, comprising selectively displaying a WIP screen including a plurality of matter records and WIP information associated with each matter record, or a prebill screen including a plurality of prebill records, each prebill record associated with a prebill and one client matter.

42. A method as claimed in claim 41, comprising displaying prebill details in response to selection of a prebill record, the prebill details including WIP information associated with the prebill.

43. A method as claimed in any one of claims 26 to 42, comprising facilitating approval of a prebill by a user and in response to approval of the prebill instigating approval of the prebill in an accounting system.

44. A method as claimed in any one of claims 26 to 43, comprising providing each user associated with the system with a user profile indicative of the types of actions

that the user is authorized to carry out.