

SMALL-BUSINESS ACCOUNTING SOFTWARE

# MYOB FirstEdge v4

£79 Better integration and off-site backup feature in this update of the popular book-keeping app

CONTACT INFO

Developer MYOB  
www.myob.co.uk  
Latest price on TechRadar  
www.techradar.com/256157

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Mac OS X 10.4 or later

FOR AND AGAINST

- ⊕ Off-site backup to .Mac
- ⊕ Integration with *Address Book*
- ⊕ Many small but valuable improvements
- ⊕ Good documentation
- ⊖ No time-billing
- ⊖ Rather dull-looking interface

VERDICT

★★★★★

“Simple yet professional book-keeping for very small businesses, but may be underpowered for some.”

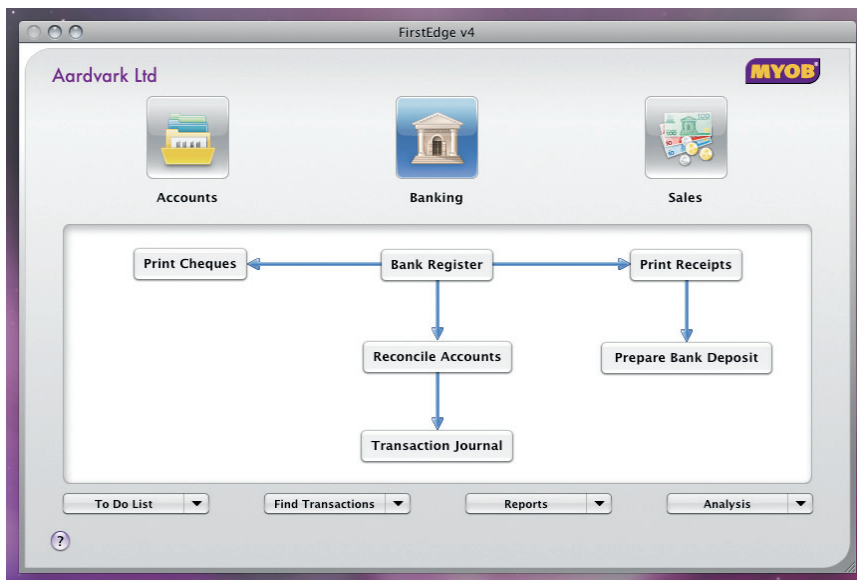
Australian company MYOB provides small-business accountancy software and, unlike some of its competitors, has shown a solid commitment to ensuring that Macs are as well catered for as Windows PCs.

There are three programs in MYOB's range for the Mac. The one we'll look at here is *FirstEdge*, which costs £79. It's the entry-level app aimed primarily at sole traders and small companies. Above it comes *AccountEdge*, for slightly larger businesses, followed by *AccountEdge Plus*, which adds up-scale features such as tax form support.

The hub for all *FirstEdge* activities is the Command Centre window, where you can switch between working with Accounts, Banking and Sales. A row of drop-down menus provides access to an extensive range of reports, a search facility and a to-do list. Looks-wise, the Command Centre has been given a face-lift to make it a bit less austere, but the basics remain the same and existing *FirstEdge* users will find it all reassuringly familiar.

Playing with Mac apps

Improved integration with other applications features prominently in this new version. Although *FirstEdge* still lacks any links to *Office*



No frills, but *FirstEdge* covers all the book-keeping basics that most small businesses need, including Accounts, Banking and Sales.

(available in *AccountEdge*), it can now talk to *Address Book* and *iCal*. This means that you can synchronise your *Address Book* records with the contact details of customers, suppliers and employees that are stored as 'cards' within *FirstEdge*. The link to *iCal* enables you to publish recurring transactions, as well as due dates for sales invoices, so that they will

accounts, a pop-up calculator that enables you to enter simple arithmetical expressions into numerical fields, bank reconciliations can now be undone, and there are numerous other small tweaks that make using *FirstEdge* that little bit smoother.

As we've come to expect from MYOB, the UK localisation is very thorough. It's not just

do, or if you want the reassurance of a safety net, then you'll need to budget for an additional £19 per year to provide telephone and online support, or £29 to include all upgrades as well. That seems entirely reasonable.

A worthy expense

The overall balance of features in *FirstEdge v4* is well judged and will be appropriate for most of the small businesses that it's aimed at. However, there is a slight bias towards sale of goods rather than provision of services, and some businesses will find the lack of time-billing a stumbling block. Also, there's no provision for multiple currencies, which may be a problem for anyone trading abroad. Both features are available in MYOB's higher-level software, so it's worth comparing features across the range before buying.

If those limitations aren't an obstacle for you, then *FirstEdge* can be recommended as an excellent choice that provides the basic tools needed to balance your books and keep your accountant happy. **Jack Weber**

## “Improved integration with other applications features prominently in this new version of FirstEdge”

appear, handily, as events in your calendar.

Another welcome new option enables you to back up your complete MYOB data to a .Mac account. This offers a simple and low-cost way of maintaining an off-site backup to secure your financial records in the event of fire, flood or theft. This was always possible as a manual backup, but making it a built-in operation means it's far more likely to be done regularly.

Among other improvements, there's a new facility for transferring money between

the essential things such as pound symbols and VAT, but also the spellings, address formats and even the sample data used in the tutorial that are UK-friendly. It's an example that more software companies could do to follow.

Over the years, MYOB has faced some criticism for only providing paid-for support. Is this really a problem, though? Both the online help and the PDF documentation are excellent and many users, especially of this entry-level program, should never need any additional support. If you

In this latest version of *FirstEdge*, money can now easily be transferred from one account to another.

