



SERENIC[®]
SOFTWARE

Power to the People Who Power NonProfits

Cloud computing for NonProfits

A whitepaper by Geni Whitehouse

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Revolutions occur in different ways. We have seen political revolts spring up in response to human rights issues, poverty, and poor governance. After years of increasing dissatisfaction, angry citizens finally reach their breaking point and take action. Other times, however, revolution comes in the form of a single idea or development that suddenly and rapidly changes the course of history. It might be an invention, a discovery, or a new way of thinking that dramatically alters the way we interact with the world. The changes brought about by space exploration, the invention of the telephone, and the discovery of penicillin, to name a few, have had a profound impact on our daily lives. Today's software revolution is a little bit of both—it has been a long time coming, but thanks to new tools and advances in technology, big changes are occurring at a rapid pace.

Information is power. In the days before the software revolution, many non-profits were denied this power because it was difficult if not impossible for them to access the information they needed to accomplish their mission. Barriers to entry made robust applications—and the resulting critical insights—available only to a privileged few. Those non-profits and NGOs fortunate enough to afford to invest in an IT staff, a secure and reliable infrastructure, and robust accounting software had ample access to reliable information. They could easily turn data into insights, manage donors, and track field activities. As a result, they had the power to accomplish their objectives with fewer hassles, making them more effective. The power, and often the donor funds, remained concentrated in the hands of the fortunate few. Other organizations, despite their passion for their mission, struggled to meet their funding and operational objectives, spending more time on administration than on changing the world.

“Man’s mind, once stretched by a new idea, never regains its original dimensions.”

– OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, JR.

The days of limited access are gone. Savvy accounting software vendors are harnessing new technology to make powerful solutions available to the masses. This movement is called cloud computing. By harnessing the cloud and deploying their solutions online, these vendors have made their solutions accessible to non-profit organizations everywhere, regardless of size, infrastructure, or budget. Once an organization goes “to the cloud” for its accounting solution, the vendor assumes the costs of IT administration and delivers the solution via a subscription model. Thanks to the cloud, more non-profit organizations can take advantage of the rich features and intelligent design of solutions like Serenic Navigator.

In this document, we’ll explore the ways Serenic Navigator’s online solution frees the non-profit revolutionaries of our time to focus on their mission.

Financial Freedom

Traditionally deployed software solutions can be costly. First, there is an upfront investment in software and hardware; then, there are annual maintenance costs and upgrade charges. And the cost doesn't end there. These solutions can take weeks, if not months, to install. There are backups to be made, security issues to address, and databases to tune. In many cases, an IT staff is required to administer the network and applications.

Cloud solutions change all that. Software in the cloud is purchased on a subscription basis, with a flat monthly fee. Application installation and maintenance, including security and backups, are all managed by the vendor.

By moving to the right cloud solution, non-profit organizations can reduce their staffing needs, budget for recurring monthly charges, get up and going more quickly, and leave the infrastructure worries—and costs—to the vendor.

Serenic Navigator Online delivers financial freedom in the following ways:

- **Subscription pricing.** Monthly fees are predictable and easier to budget, as compared to a single capital expense.
- **Software upgrades.** New releases are automatic, with no additional costs.
- **Reduced administration costs.** Software and infrastructure administration is managed by Serenic and their hosting partner, with a 99.99% uptime guarantee.

Revolutionary Idea: Martin Luther (1483 – 1546). Theologian and monk known for initiating the Protestant Reformation.

Unrestricted Access

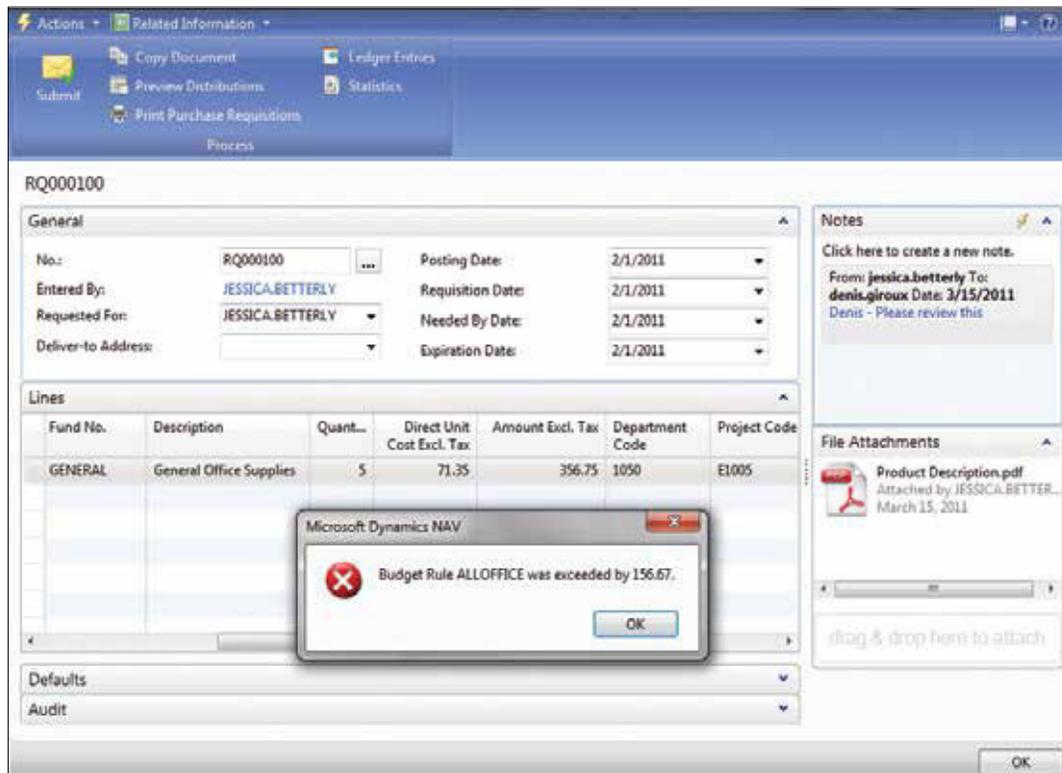
It takes good information to make good decisions. In today's mobile, global economy, successful non-profits demand information on their terms – whenever and wherever they need it. They need to stay on top of encumbrances, monitor fund balances, and manage budgets. They need to connect with field locations and track activities in the main office, in real-time.

With the depth of features and functions Serenic has made available in the cloud, employees and volunteers can finally break the chains that bind them to their desks. They can get out among the communities they serve without sacrificing management control. They can leverage the Internet to get the job done – all in a secure, robust environment.

Serenic Navigator Online makes the powerful features of Serenic Navigator available from your laptop, anytime, anywhere. That means everyone in the organization is at liberty to benefit from features like:

- **Role-based access.** Employees access the specific information they need to perform their job via a role-tailored dashboard.
- **Advanced allocations.** Allocate dollars across funds, accounts, and user-defined dimensions using percentages, amounts, or a combination of the two.
- **Budget alerts.** Create budget rules or notifications to warn staff when a transaction will exceed budgetary limits.

Revolutionary Idea: Galileo Galilei (1564- 1642). Physicist, mathematician, philosopher, and astronomer who improved the telescope, made numerous astronomical observations, and transformed physics and math. He played a major role in the Scientific Revolution.



The Right to Keen Insights

Everyone seems to have an interest in non-profit and NGO activities. From government agencies to community watchdogs, non-profits are constantly in a position of having to share information. That makes timely and accurate reporting a crucial function of any non-profit accounting solution.

Serenic Navigator Online provides everyone in your organization the information they need to make better decisions and comply with grant and donor requirements. Navigator Online makes information accessible through:

- **Powerful drill-downs.** Source documents are accessible from any area of the application, whether they were created two minutes ago or two years ago.
- **Excel integration.** Import and export transaction data in multiple areas throughout the system, including any journal in the application.
- **Advanced reporting.** Create individual row and column report formats, and then mix and match to meet every reporting need across accounts.
- **Categorization.** Associate transactions across user-defined dimensions and then export directly to pivot tables in Excel.
- **Dashboards and alerts.** Get information when you need it via dashboards and exception reporting.
- **Flexible, easy reporting options.** Create ad hoc reports directly from the general ledger or cut and paste information directly into Excel.

Revolutionary Idea: Dmitri Ivanovich Mendeleev (1834-1907). Scientist and professor of general chemistry at the University of St. Petersburg who created the periodic table of the elements and revolutionized the field of chemistry.

No.	Name	Budget	Commitments	Encumbrances	Actual	Available
5220	Computer Supplies	61,813.55	500.00	19,362.50	39,000.00	1,000.00
5221	Assessment Materials	812.08	0.00	0.00		
5229	Total Printing & Office	128,863.90	500.00	20,524.92	89,000.00	
5230	Postage and Mailing Services	0.00	0.00	0.00		
5231	Postage	20,806.00	0.00	0.00	16,000.00	
5233	Fed Ex/Overnight	1,040.31	0.00	0.00		
5235	Mailing Services	5,201.55	0.00	0.00	4,000.00	
5237	Mass Email	0.00	0.00	0.00		
5240	Telephone	52,015.00	0.00	0.00	40,000.00	
5270	Production Costs	0.00	0.00	0.00		
5273	Photography	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
5298	Total Postage & Mailing Svc	79,062.86	0.00	0.00	61,636.00	17,426.86
5299	Total Office Expense	207,926.76	500.00	20,524.92	151,037.80	35,884.04
5300	Travel, Entertainment & Promo.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
5310	Advertising and Promotions	15,604.55	0.00	0.00	12,165.00	3,439.55
5315	Design Expense	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
5320	Comp Gifts/Memorials	5,201.55	0.00	0.00	4,055.00	1,146.55
5321	Complimentary Tickets	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Figure 1. Drill down to source transactions from any screen.

Due Processing of Funds

Non-profit organizations have unique system requirements. While horizontal accounting applications provide a general ledger to deliver financial insights, not only do non-profits need to manage to a financial result, they also need to adhere to individual funding and investment requirements. Simplified systems that provide a single view of information across standard accounting periods can't meet the needs of non-profits who must manage grants and awards across multiple years. Non-profits need specialized tools that are designed to support their organization and their unique processes.

Serenic Navigator Online is designed to handle the unique accounting and process requirements of non-profits and NGOs. With Navigator's fund management tools, non-profits can manage expenditures in accordance with restrictions imposed by individual donors, grants, or funding sources. Transactions can cross years and can be tracked to specific grants or awards through all areas of the application including:

- Cash Receipts
- Accounts Payable (Procurement processes including Requisitions and Purchase Orders, if desired)
- Accounts Receivable
- Fixed Assets
- Ledger journal transactions

Revolutionary Idea: *Dr. Douglas C. Engelbart (1925-). A PhD and scientist who invented the computer mouse while employed at Stanford Research Institute. His invention forever changed the way humans interact with computers.*

Room to Grow

Today's organizations need a solution that grows with them. Systems built upon old platforms with arcane data structures might be fine for your needs today but they can't meet your needs in the future. You might need to manage across entities, locations, and even currencies. You need a solution built for use in a global economy with advanced features and advanced flexibility.

As a Serenic Navigator Online user, you might start out serving a single local market. As your services expand, you may cross state lines and eventually country borders. At that point, you will need multi-currency and multi-lingual capabilities and the additional comprehensive features available in Serenic Navigator's on-premise solution. As an Online user, you would have the freedom to start with Serenic Navigator Online Basic and move to Serenic Navigator Online BE (Business Essentials), or Serenic Navigator Online AM (Advanced Management), depending on the features needed. You also have the option to simply move your data to the on-premise solution and continue to operate with your existing data. No one has to be retrained, no database has to be converted, and your existing processes would remain unchanged. System users would not even notice the change.

Revolutionary Idea: *Louis Pasteur (1822–1895). A French chemist and microbiologist remembered for his remarkable breakthroughs in the causes and prevention of diseases.*

The Right to Visualize

Not everyone understands information presented in a written report or financial statement. Some users may prefer to receive information visually. While many applications allow you to export information for manipulation in Word or Excel, the process can quickly become unwieldy.

With Serenic Navigator Online, you can seamlessly create graphs from inside any list. You can access the embedded chart pane and quickly select the data to display. Once you have the graph setup, you can then paste it directly into Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint, or virtually any Microsoft Windows-based document. Users can also email information directly from Navigator Online, creating an HTML link back to the information in the database. Serenic is built on Microsoft Dynamics NAV and benefits from intelligent integration with all of the Microsoft Office products.

Revolutionary Idea: *Paul Cézanne (1839–1906). French artist and leader of the cubism movement, credited with changing the approach to art in the 20th century.*

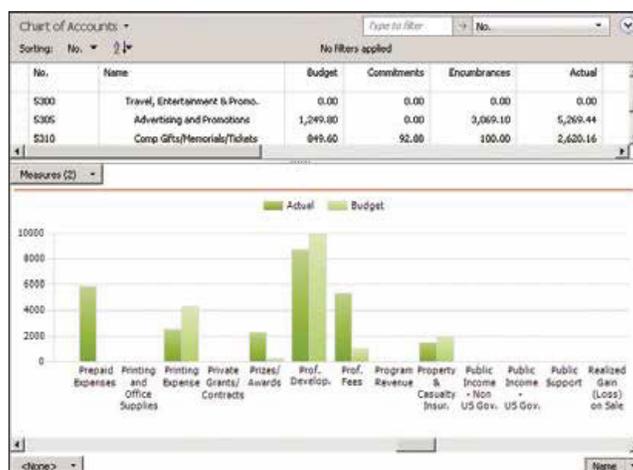


Figure 2. Embedded charts and graphs make information visual.

Freedom to Plan

You need a good plan to deliver great service. It's not enough to have a comparison of a single budget to actual results. Non-profit organizations and NGOs need to monitor multiple budgets across different time periods and keep track of amounts encumbered, committed, and provisioned. These organizations want to compare expenditures to budgets for a single project or across different service areas. It takes a flexible system with information stored in sufficient detail to deliver critical insights.

Serenic Navigator Online gives you the tools you need to manage budgets at the right level of detail. You can view information across time periods and segments of your organization and track funds at all stages—from encumbered to committed to provisioned. You can associate expenditures to individual funding sources to ensure compliance with program guidelines. And while you're entering transactions, Navigator Online can automatically monitor budget terms and notify you of compliance problems. Serenic puts you in control of your funds with:

- **Time-sensitive information.** Budgets that flow across any period of time, with complete access to all transactions, even after the fiscal year closing process.
- **Grouped and summarized.** Summarized budgets across account groups, user-defined dimensions, and self-balancing funds.
- **Accurate.** Budget checking that allows you to choose which types of transactions you want to be factored into determining your available budget, including commitments, encumbrances and/or actual expenses.
- **Paperless.** Ability to store scanned documents as supporting documentation for budgets.

Revolutionary Idea: Archimedes (287 B.C-212 B.C.). Mathematician and scientist famous for revolutionizing the subject of Geometry.

ALLOFFICE · 1/1/2011

General

Code: ALLOFFICE Description: All office expenses
Effective Date: 1/1/2011 Description 2:
Active:

Rule

Indicate whether the system shall display a warning or an error when the transaction exceeds the available budget. The available budget is the Year-To-Date Budget less the Year-To-Date Actuals, Encumbrances and/or Commitments, if checked below.

Budget Settings

Budget Name Filter: FY2011
G/L Account Filter: 5215..5225
Less Actuals:
Less Encumbrances:
Less Commitments:
Exceeded Budget Action: Error - Prevent Data Entry

Dimensions to Include in Calculations

G/L Account Check:
Fund Check:
Department Code:
Project Code:
Sub Award Code:
Ministry Unit Code:
Donor Code:
Region Code:
Restrictions Code:
Shortcut Dimension 8 Code:

Figure 3. You decide how budgetary limits are computed and monitored.

The Right to Remit Freely

It takes funds to keep organizations going and there are always plenty of bills to be paid. NGOs and non-profits need to be able to make payments easily without losing sight of budgetary and grant restrictions.

Serenic Navigator Online gives organizations the flexibility to manage their expenditures from any location and to make payments in a number of different ways. Navigator gives you control over your remittances with options like:

- **Flexible payment terms.** Pay vendors based upon due dates or user-defined parameters.
- **Pay by invoice or vendor.** Print a single check per invoice, combine all invoices for the same vendor, or combine some of the vendor's invoices while printing separate checks for others.
- **Pay in batches or individually.** Issue "emergency" checks without selecting all checks for payment.
- **Pay electronically.** Use ACH formats to make Electronic Funds Transfer and automatically e-mail the vendor a remittance advice when the EFT is processed.
- **Customizable checks.** Select from multiple check formats or create a custom format and add .bmp logos and addresses to check stock.
- **Signature control.** Automatically print signatures on checks with full security, and add a second signature when the check amount reaches a user-defined amount.
- **Expense allocations.** Line allocations let you distribute expenses across different accounts using fixed percentages or amounts.

Revolutionary Idea: Charles Darwin (1809 –1882). English naturalist whose ideas revolutionized biology in the 19th century.

The Right to Categorize as You See Fit

Some accounting systems are based on a rigid chart of accounts. Information can be summarized and grouped, but only when it is in consecutive order. And if you have segmented account numbers, they are generally defined as departments or sub-accounts. You just don't have enough options for analyzing your organizational costs in enough detail.

Serenic Navigator sets you free from rigid hierarchical dictates and lets you define dimensions, assign values, and set up attributes to reflect your reporting and accounting needs. By capturing data at the right level of detail, you will be better able to identify potential problems before they arise – across all the areas that matter to your organization. With unlimited dimension values, you can build categories like programs, projects, service areas, facilities, and geographies and control posting using user-defined date ranges you assign. Individual users can take advantage of time savers like commodity codes and short cut keys to speed up data entry, while keeping track of categories associated with individual transactions.

Revolutionary Idea: *J.R.R Tolkien (1892 –1973). An English author and university professor whose Lord of the Rings trilogy revolutionized the fantasy novel genre and inspired cultural movements.*

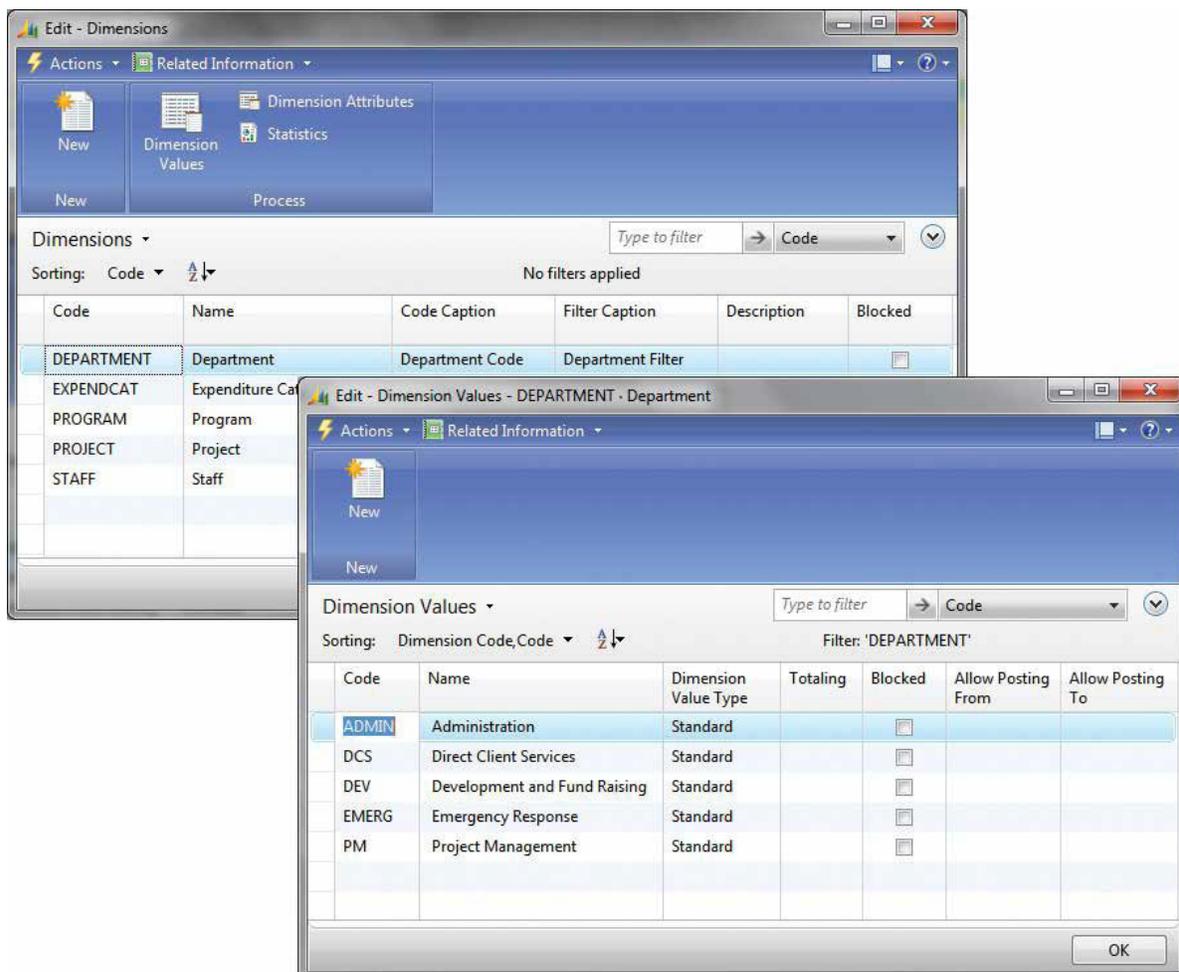


Figure 4. Create user-defined dimensions to track details as needed.

Freedom of Speech

Social media is quickly becoming a powerful marketing and communications tools. Rather than tracking conversations in a separate application, organizations need to stay on top of the dialog. NGOs and non-profits need information in real-time as vendor, donor or constituent dialogue could impact services, funding, or spending decisions.

Serenic Navigator Online frees you to integrate contact information with social media contacts so you can store Twitter names and even view Tweets real-time from many master records. You can also access important websites and send e-mails from many areas in the application.

Revolutionary Idea: *Patrick Henry (1736 – June 6, 1799). Orator and politician, known for saying “Give Me Liberty or Give me Death” in his speech to the Virginia Convention in 1765.*

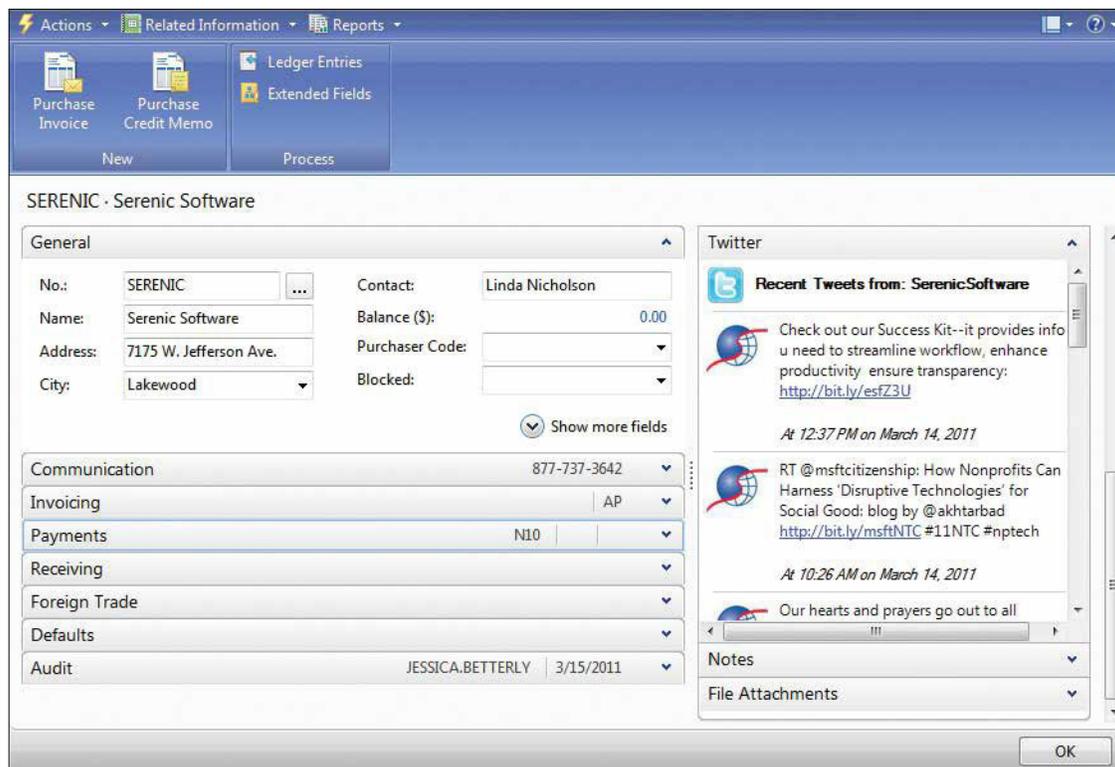


Figure 5. Connect social media information with all your contacts.

More Power to You

Non-profit organizations are the revolutionaries of our time. Rather than leading the charge with marches and protests or scientific inventions, organization leaders tackle the problems of the world with research, volunteers, and specialized programs. While their methods are largely non-violent, their passion for individual causes is strong.

Unfortunately, many of these passionate non-profits have been diverting precious energy, time, and effort to managing administrative tasks. Forced to work within budgetary constraints, they have opted to suffer with low-cost, low-functioning accounting applications. Those days are over. Thanks to revolutionary advances in software, Internet accessibility, and bandwidth, non-profits of any size can have access to powerful software like Serenic Navigator Online at an affordable price. That means organizations will have more time to spend on causes and will spend less time on administrative hassles.

Let the revolution begin!

Serenic Navigator Online Bill of Rights

We believe access to information is an inalienable right of non-profits and NGOs everywhere. This is our promise to you:

1. You have the right to access information with your laptop anytime, from anywhere.
2. You have the right to a predictable monthly fee that includes software and hardware.
3. You have the right to knowledgeable support from people who understand your organization.
4. You have the right to move your information from a hosted environment to an on-premise solution when you so desire.
5. You have the right to a 99.9% uptime guarantee.
6. You have the right to be running on the most current version of our software.
7. You have the right to create a system that supports your unique processes and provides interfaces designed for individual roles.
8. You have the right to segment information any way you see fit with user defined dimensions.
9. You have the right to a fully integrated system that provides access to all financial data and mirrors your business processes across departments and funding organizations.
10. You have the right to real-time information with powerful budgetary and management controls.

About Serenic Software

Serenic Software develops and delivers mission-critical ERP software solutions for public service organizations including: K-12 school districts/boards, public sector, nonprofits (NPOs), and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Serenic is a Gold ERP and ISV vendor and a development partner for Microsoft. Serenic public service solutions are trusted by over 1,000 organizations around the globe. You can learn more about Serenic Software at www.serenic.com.

About the Author

Geni Whitehouse, CPA.CITP, CSPM, is a speaker and writer and the Countess of Communication at Even a Nerd can be Heard. She is a former partner in an Atlanta CPA firm, and a former software executive on a mission to eliminate boring from the worlds of accounting and technology. She is the author of *How to Make a Boring Subject Interesting: 52 ways even a nerd can be heard*, which is available on Amazon.com.

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