

GRC Profile: ACL Services

www.acl.com

- **Headquarters:** Vancouver
- **Public/Private:** Private
- **Revenue Estimate (CY08):** Less than \$50M
- **Target Buyer:** Audit and finance
- **Customers:** 12,000 (approx.)
- **Primary Industries:** Cross-industry

GRC products and applications

ACL's continuous auditing and monitoring software products run on the ACL Audit Exchange platform, including prepackaged analytic modules for purchase-to-payment, travel and entertainment, general ledger, and payroll functions that assure controls effectiveness and uncover fraud.

AMR Research Opinion

Founded in 1987, ACL is synonymous with auditing technology. For decades, the company has effectively sold software to internal and external auditors in many countries. It's again using its roots in that community to advance its extension into continuous monitoring and auditing.

The more mature the GRC world gets, the more it encompasses the auditor's point of view. Any activities that can reduce external auditor efforts should deliver cost savings to the bottom line in the form of reduced audit fees and more efficient verification of internal controls. Delivered on the ACL Audit Exchange platform, ACL's products makes the audit process itself more effective, leading to even more potential payback.

ACL products can be used by other constituencies in the firm to support continuous monitoring, specifically business process owners and IT staff. While audit verifies the accuracy of business and finance transactions as well as sniffs out potential fraud, business users want to use the technology to check that processes as designed are also being executed the same way, or that internal controls, such as authorizations or limit testing, are performed on an ongoing basis, with exceptions sent directly to the process owner. Meanwhile IT can use this technology in innovative ways to monitor system configuration changes that may open the door to suspect business activity.

ACL's products are clearly part of the GRC Execution category in AMR Research's GRC taxonomy. While not hooked directly into specific business applications, it can be tailored to access data from virtually any source system. The Audit Exchange platform and components have a strong financial flavor, but there's no reason the product couldn't be extended to other content areas where monitoring is desired. ACL's reputation gives it a boost, but it must compete with other vendors, both specialists and enterprise platforms, that are coming at this from other compelling angles.