**capstone project**

# Capstone Outline Sample

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**Tax returns through an accountant versus through accounting software**
**Introduction**

 • Introduce the importance and history of using accounting for taxes, including filing paperwork and keeping records of expenses.
 • Software: first introduced in 1985, these tax software allowed individuals and businesses to explore the idea of filing their own taxes without the need for an accountant.
 • Accountants: the traditional route for filing taxes, they keep information on all expenses and income as well as assets and manage the financial aspect for you without the need to handle the paperwork.
 • Accountants now may utilize software to ensure accuracy and keep up with multiple clients; thus, the two fields are not mutually exclusive; the issue at hand is how accurate one is over the other.
 • The software utilizes and relies on preset rules that can get inaccurate as more niche situations are inputted.
 • Accountants study tax law for years and are more familiar with obscure parts of tax law, seeing it more often than tax software due to the trend of wealthier clients having more of these assets in niche areas.
 • Perhaps the choice is situational based on the complexity of your tax situation.
 • Cost is also a big factor; one clearly costs more than the other; there are movements towards changing these results.

**Explain the research design and how subjects were chosen**

 • Selected 10 individuals randomly and asked for consent for their previous years' tax returns
 • Asked 5 accountants to file taxes for each of the 10 returns and utilized 5 different tax software programs to file taxes for each
 • Gauge tax software on the clarity of questions for each section
 • Assessed amounts for accuracy (what the IRS accepted and how far from the medial return amount each calculation was) as well as variability

**Conclusions**

 • What were the variability and spread of the data?
 • Was there a clear trend towards identifying more tax deductions in one group versus another?
 • Explain factors that could influence these numbers.