



CPAFMA 2017 Paperless Benchmark Survey Results

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2017 Survey Powered By

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The CPA Firm Management Association completed their 2017 paperless benchmarking survey to find out the status of paperless office practices in accounting firms this upcoming busy season. The survey has been conducted every two years beginning in 2003 to help identify trends in adopting “less paper” processes. This year, 176 firms participated in the survey.

Member firms are leading the profession by adopting digital workflow tools, scanning tax documents at the front end and using digital tools to bookmark and input data into tax returns as well as delivering organizers and returns electronically. Audit teams are reducing the amount of equipment they are taking into the field and doing more work and planning remotely as they too utilize portals and secure email solutions. Administrative teams are transitioning payables, receivables and accounting to completely digital solutions as well as starting to tackle human resources issues. Compare your firm against these findings to see if you are on the bleeding/stable edge or behind with an opportunity to implement some leading practices this busy season!

We encourage you to complete the survey and compare your firm’s answers against the 2017 listed adoption rate amongst member firms. If you answered NO and 80% or more of your peers have implemented the solution, you would be considered on the “dull” edge and should look into implementing a solution immediately. If 50% or more of your peers had implemented a solution that you had not yet adopted, we suggest you attend the next CPAFMA chapter/regional meeting and inquire others and garner resources to fast track the implementation of that practice. For items under 50% adoption, actively monitor the top tools by reading reviews and attending sessions at conferences, so you are ready to respond when the opportunity arises.



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| 2017 CPAFMA Paperless Benchmark Survey | 2017 | 2015 |
|--|------|------|
| <p>1. Tax: Does your firm utilize a digital workflow tool to manage tax return progress? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (62%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (38%)</p> <p>*If YES, what tool does your firm utilize? <input type="checkbox"/> Xpntax XCM (20%) <input type="checkbox"/> Thomson FirmFlow (14%) <input type="checkbox"/> Practice Management Projects (10%) (Thomson or CCH) <input type="checkbox"/> iChannel, Doc.IT and Office Tools each had (2%)</p> | 62% | 59% |
| <p>2. Tax: Is your firm delivering the <u>majority</u> of your Organizers via digital means? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (18%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (72%)</p> <p>* If YES, what tool does your firm utilize: <input type="checkbox"/> Thomson NetClient CS (10%) <input type="checkbox"/> CCH Portal (7%)</p> | 18% | 15% |
| <p>3. Tax: Does your firm <u>primarily</u> scan client source documents (W2, 1099, etc.) at the front end of the process when the return is received and/or prior to review (mid-level scanning) so they are utilized onscreen? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (82%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (18%)</p> | 82% | 75% |
| <p>4. Tax: Is your firm utilizing internal software or external services to <u>organize/bookmark</u> scanned client source documents into a standard PDF Format? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (67%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (33%)</p> <p>*If YES, what tool does your firm utilize: <input type="checkbox"/> CCH FxScan (38%) <input type="checkbox"/> SurePrep (6%)</p> | 67% | 70% |
| <p>5. Tax: Is your firm using software that utilizes Optical Character Recognition to automatically transfer data from scanned source documents into your tax program? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (49%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (51%)</p> <p>* If YES, what tool does your firm utilize: <input type="checkbox"/> CCH AutoFlow (30%) <input type="checkbox"/> SurePrep (7%) <input type="checkbox"/> Thomson Reuters (5%) <input type="checkbox"/> Doc.IT (3%)</p> | 49% | 47% |
| <p>6. *NEW-Tax: Does your firm utilize a digital annotation tool when working on Adobe/PDF files? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (72%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (28%)</p> <p>*If YES, what tool does your utilize: <input type="checkbox"/> CCH PDFlyer (48%) <input type="checkbox"/> cPaperless Tick Tie and Calculate (11%) <input type="checkbox"/> Doc.It (6%) <input type="checkbox"/> Moffsoft Calculator (9%)</p> | 72% | New |

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|---|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <p>7. Tax: Does your firm primarily deliver tax returns in a digital format? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (53%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (47%)</p> <p>* If YES, what tools does your firm utilize: <input type="checkbox"/> Citrix ShareFile (17%) <input type="checkbox"/> Thomson NetClient CS (13%) <input type="checkbox"/> CCH Portal (12%)</p> | 53% | 39% |
| <p>8. Tax: What is the primary monitor configuration for tax professionals on their desktop? <input type="checkbox"/> Triple Monitors (51%) <input type="checkbox"/> Dual-Oversize (at least one screen 20" or greater) (33%) <input type="checkbox"/> Dual Standard (both screens less than 20") (12%) <input type="checkbox"/> Quadruple (4%)</p> | 88% use more than traditional dual | 80% use more than traditional dual |
| <p>9. Tax: Do the majority of your tax personnel utilize at least one monitor in a vertical, "portrait" mode? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (40%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (60%)</p> | 40% | 45% |
| <p>10. Tax: Do you plan to use a digital eSignature tool for tax returns/authorizations? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (48%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (52%)</p> <p>*If YES, what tool do you utilize: <input type="checkbox"/> RightSignature (18%) <input type="checkbox"/> CCH eSignature (12%) <input type="checkbox"/> cPaperless SafeSign (7%)</p> | 48% | 31% |
| <p>11. Audit: Does your firm primarily link its audit applications to its tax application to digitally transfer trial balance information? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (62%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (38%)</p> | 62% | 68% |
| <p>12. Audit: Do your personnel working outside the office access firm applications and information via a remote connection (SaaS, Virtual Private Network, Citrix/WTS) more than 50% of the time? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (76%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (24%)</p> | 76% | 77% |
| <p>13. Audit: Do your auditors carry multiple monitors in the field? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (62%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (38%)</p> <p>* If YES, what brand do they carry? <input type="checkbox"/> ASUS (20%) <input type="checkbox"/> AOC (18%) <input type="checkbox"/> Lenovo (13%) <input type="checkbox"/> HP (13%)</p> | 62% | 74% |
| <p>14. Audit: Do auditors carry any of the following into the field the majority of the time? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (49%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (51%)</p> <p>* If YES, which tools: <input type="checkbox"/> Scanners (42% vs. 57% in 2015) <input type="checkbox"/> Printers (11% vs. 22% in 2015) <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-Function Devices (7% vs. 9% in 2015)</p> | 49% | 67% |

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| <p>15. Audit: Does your Firm utilize a single vendor for audit programs/engagement binders? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (72%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (28%)</p> <p>*If YES, which tools: <input type="checkbox"/> CCH Engagement with CCH Knowledge Coach (33%) <input type="checkbox"/> TR Engagement CS/AdvanceFlow/PPC Smart (23%) <input type="checkbox"/> Caseware (4%)</p> | 60% | 34% |
| <p>16. Audit: Do your auditors utilize data extraction tools on the <u>majority</u> of their engagements? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (61%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (39%)</p> <p>*If YES, which tools: <input type="checkbox"/> Excel (50%) <input type="checkbox"/> IDEA (12%) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Active/ActiveData (8%) <input type="checkbox"/> Valadis (1%)</p> | 61% | 74% |
| <p>17. Audit: Do your auditors utilize a digital audit scheduling tool (other than Excel)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (23%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (77%)</p> <p>*If YES, which tools: <input type="checkbox"/> ProStaff (8%) <input type="checkbox"/> XCM (5%) <input type="checkbox"/> Doc.IT 92%) <input type="checkbox"/> Staff Track (1%)</p> | 23% | 19% |
| <p>18. *NEW: Audit: Do your auditors utilize digital confirmations? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (47%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (53%)</p> <p>*If YES, which tools: <input type="checkbox"/> Capital Confirmation.com (26%) <input type="checkbox"/> AuditConfirmations.com (19%)</p> | 47% | New |
| <p>19. *NEW: Audit: Do your auditors receive the majority of source documents from clients digitally before the start of an audit? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (57%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (43%)</p> <p>*If YES, which tools: <input type="checkbox"/> CCH Portal (20%) <input type="checkbox"/> Thomson NetClient CS (9%) <input type="checkbox"/> Citrix ShareFile (8%)</p> | 57% | New |

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| <p>20. Administration: Does your firm utilize an intranet to store firm wide information (i.e. personnel manual, best practices and internal firm procedures)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (53%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (47%)</p> <p>*If YES, which tools: <input type="checkbox"/> Microsoft SharePoint (12%) <input type="checkbox"/> Thomson GoFileRoom (6%) <input type="checkbox"/> Internal Shared Network Drive (6%) <input type="checkbox"/> CCH Document (4%)</p> | 53% | 72% |
| <p>21. Administration: Does your firm have an electronic document destruction procedure to ensure deletion of outdated electronic files on the network? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (53%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (47%)</p> | 53% | 71% |
| <p>22. Administration: Does your firm use a firm-wide document management program for archival of all final tax returns, financial reports, and firm correspondence? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (80%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (20%)</p> <p>*If YES, which tools: <input type="checkbox"/> CCH Document (On Premise) (18%) <input type="checkbox"/> CCH Document-Access (Cloud) (7%) <input type="checkbox"/> Thomson GoFileRoom (Cloud) (15%) <input type="checkbox"/> Thomson File Cabinet CS (On Premise) (11%) <input type="checkbox"/> Thomson File Cabinet Virtual Office (Cloud) (6%) <input type="checkbox"/> Conarc iChannel (On Premise) (5%) <input type="checkbox"/> Doc-IT (On Premise) (7%)</p> | 80% | 78% |
| <p>23. Administration: Does your firm pay the majority of accounts payables via electronic means such as credit card, online bank draft, or online service (Bank ACH, Bill.com, etc.)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (47%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (53%)</p> | 47% | 52% |
| <p>24. Administration: Does you firm utilize a remote check scanner in your office to deposit client checks? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (71%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (29%)</p> | 71% | 76% |
| <p>25. Administration: Does your firm deliver digital payroll stubs via secure email or portal? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (67%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (33%)</p> | 67% | 70% |

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| <p>26. Administration: Are expense reports created and submitted electronically? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (48%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (54%)</p> <p>*If YES, which tools: <input type="checkbox"/> Practice Management/Adobe (26%) <input type="checkbox"/> Excel/Adobe (15%) <input type="checkbox"/> Tallie, Expensify, Concur, Star (1%)</p> | 48% | 47% |
| <p>27.*NEW: Administration: Does your firm utilize a digital tool for managing the recruiting/hiring process? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (14%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (86%)</p> <p>*If YES, which tools: <input type="checkbox"/> BambooHR (23%) <input type="checkbox"/> JazzHR (2%)</p> | 14% | New |
| <p>28. *NEW: Administration: Does your firm utilize a digital HR managing employee evaluations? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (21%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (79%)</p> <p>*If YES, which tools: <input type="checkbox"/> PerformancePro (4%) <input type="checkbox"/> Halogen (3%) <input type="checkbox"/> Bamboo (2%)</p> | 21% | New |
| <p>29. *NEW: Administration: Does your firm utilize a digital tool to track CPE compliance? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (61%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (39%)</p> <p>*If YES, which tools: <input type="checkbox"/> Practice Management (25%) <input type="checkbox"/> Thomson Learning/Rewired (13%) <input type="checkbox"/> Excel Spreadsheet (7%) <input type="checkbox"/> Micron CE Manager (4%) <input type="checkbox"/> CPELink, AICPA LMA, Internal DB (2%)</p> | 61% | New |
| <p>30. *NEW: Administration: Does your firm keep CPE Certificates in a digital format? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (47%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (53%)</p> <p>*If YES, where are they stored: <input type="checkbox"/> Adobe PDF on Network Drive (18%) <input type="checkbox"/> Thomson Learning/Rewired (10%) <input type="checkbox"/> Micron CE Manager (3%)</p> | 47% | New |
| <p>31. Practice Management: Do firm personnel utilize information dashboards within your Practice Management application to update internal reporting information? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (28%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (72%)</p> | 28% | 33% |

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| <p>32. Practice Management: Are the <u>majority</u> of invoices prepared onscreen rather than completed on <i>manual</i> billing sheets? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (73%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (27%)</p> | 73% | 67% |
| <p>33. Practice Management: Does your firm deliver client invoices electronically? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (41%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (59%)</p> | 41% | 35% |
| <p>34. Communications: Does your firm provide internet enabled devices (other than smart phones) for senior management working outside the office (i.e. tablets, netbooks, etc.)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (32%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (68%)</p> | 32% | 54% |
| <p>35. Communications: Has your firm implemented Unified Messaging Technology for all staff (voice message/integrated fax delivered electronically via email)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (35%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (65%)</p> | 35% | 62% |
| <p>36. Communications: Does your firm utilize a collaboration tool which includes instant messaging? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (39%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (61%)</p> <p>*If YES, which tools: <input type="checkbox"/> Microsoft Skype for Business (Lync/Office Communicator) (26%) <input type="checkbox"/> Cisco Jabber (3%)</p> | 39% | 47% |
| <p>37. Communications: Does your firm utilize video calling/conferencing? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (47%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (53%)</p> <p>*If YES, which tools: <input type="checkbox"/> Microsoft Skype (28%) <input type="checkbox"/> GoToMeeting (6%) <input type="checkbox"/> LifeSize (3%)</p> | 47% | 54% |

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|--|------|------|
| <p>38. Technology: Does your firm backup all firm data to the Internet (web-based storage/archival) on at least a monthly basis? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (85%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (15%)</p> <p>*If YES, how often: <input type="checkbox"/> Daily/Work Days (76%) <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly (5%) <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly (4%)</p> | 85% | 67% |
| <p>39. Technology: Has your firm implemented a Mobile Device Management application to secure your mobile devices and access to the firm's network? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (50%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (50%)</p> <p>*If YES, which tools: <input type="checkbox"/> Exchange/Active Sync (37%) <input type="checkbox"/> Maas360 (2%) <input type="checkbox"/> AirWatch, DUO (1%) <input type="checkbox"/> Firm only allows access via firm issued smart phones (3%) [staff carry 2nd Phone]</p> | 50% | 35% |
| <p>40. Technology: Does your firm utilize remote access tools to connect to client computers to provide support, training or remote work? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (60%) <input type="checkbox"/> No (40%)</p> <p>*If YES, which tools: <input type="checkbox"/> Go to Meeting/GoToAssist (31%) <input type="checkbox"/> LogMeIn (14%) <input type="checkbox"/> Join.me, TeamViewer (3%)</p> | 60% | 47% |

Roman Kepczyk presented a MAPCast to members of the CPA Firm Management Association outlining the results of the survey and how firms can integrate them on January 31, 2017.

A PODCast of the MAPCast is available from CPAFMA.org or by clicking [here](#).

Roman H. Kepczyk, CPA.CITP, AAAPM is the Director of Consulting for Xcentric, LLC and works exclusively with accounting firms to implement today's leading best practices and technologies incorporating Lean Six Sigma methodologies to optimize firm production workflows. Roman is a CPAFMA Advisory Board Member and also the author of "Quantum of Paperless: A Partner's Guide to Accounting Firm Optimization" which includes the results of the CPAFMA 2017 Paperless Benchmark Survey and CPAFMA 2016 Information Technology Survey.