



CPAFMA 2019 Digitally Driven (Paperless) Benchmark Survey Results

by Roman H. Kepczyk, CPA.CITP, PAFM

The CPA Firm Management Association completed their 2019 Digitally Driven (Paperless) benchmarking survey in December 2018 to find out the status of digitally driven office practices in member firms for the 2019 busy season. This “paperless” benchmarking survey has been conducted every two years since 2003 to help identify digital trends that medium and larger firms are adopting within their practices. This year 173 firms participated in the survey with the results summarized and compared to the 2017 findings below.

2019 CPAFMA Digitally Driven (Paperless) Benchmark Survey	2017	2019
<p>1. Tax: What digital workflow tool does your firm utilize to manage due dates and tax return progress?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -21% Xpitax XCM -14% Thomson Reuters FirmFlow -13% CCH Workstream -10% CCH Practice Management (Projects) - 6% Thomson Reuters Practice Management (Projects) -15% Other, with no products garnering more than five users <p>-21% None/Not Applicable</p>	62%	79%
<p>2. Tax: If your firm delivers the majority of your organizers via digital means what tools do you utilize?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -8% Thomson Reuters NetClient CS Portal -7% CCH Axxess Portal -3% Citrix ShareFile <p>-69% Our firm is NOT delivering the majority of organizers digitally</p>	18%	31%
<p>3. Tax: What internal software or external services does your firm utilize to organize/bookmark scanned client source documents into a standard PDF Format?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -45% CCH ProSystem fx Scan - 9% SurePrep - 6% Adobe - 5% Doc-It <p>-24% None/Not Applicable</p>	67%	76%
<p>4. Tax: What Optical Character Recognition application does your firm utilize to automatically transfer data from scanned source documents into your tax program?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -38% CCH ProSystem fx Scan with AutoFlow - 9% SurePrep <p>-44% None/Not Applicable</p>	49%	56%

<p>5. Tax: What digital annotation tool does your firm utilize when working on Adobe/PDF files?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -57% CCH ProSystem fx PDFlyer -11% cPaperless Tick Tie and Calculate - 5% Doc.IT Suite <p>-18% None/Not Applicable</p>	72%	82%
<p>6. Tax: What application does your firm utilize to deliver the majority of your tax returns in a digital format?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -21% Citrix ShareFile -16% cPaperless SafeSend -13% CCH Axxess Portal -11% Thomson NetClient CS <p>-26% Our firm does NOT deliver the majority of tax returns digitally</p>	53%	74%
<p>7. Tax: What is the primary monitor configuration for tax professionals on their desktop?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2% Single Oversize (30" or larger) -32% Dual-Oversize (20" or greater) -59% Triple Monitors - 3% Quadruple - 4% Dual <20" Legacy monitor configuration 	88% use more than two traditional monitors	96% use more than two traditional monitors
<p>8. Tax: What digital eSignature tool does your firm utilize for tax returns/authorizations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -17% Citrix RightSignature -14% cPaperless SafeSign - 7% CCH ProSystem fx Axxess eSignature - 6% DocuSign - 5% Thomson eSignature <p>-43% None/Not Applicable</p>	48%	57%
<p>9. Audit: Does your firm primarily link its audit applications to its tax application to digitally transfer trial balance information? 59% YES</p>	62%	59%
<p>10. 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? 77% YES</p>	76%	77%
<p>11. Audit: What type of external monitors do your auditors carry in the field?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -37% ASUS -21% AOC -14% Lenovo - 5% HP <p>-21% None-are auditors do not take dual monitors into the field</p>	62%	79%
<p>12. Audit: Do auditors carry any of the following into the field the majority of the time?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -51% Scanners -12% Printers - 5% Multi-Function Devices -62% Mobile Hot Spot/MiFi Device 	49% Scanners	51% Scanners

<p>13. Audit: Does your Firm utilize a single vendor for audit programs/engagement binders? -77% CCH ProSystem Fx Engagement -17% Thomson Engagement CS/Advance Flow - 6% Caseware</p> <p><i>*Combined question discarded and will be reworded in 2021 to ask what specific audit program and audit binder combination utilized.</i></p>	60%	NEW
<p>14. Audit: What data extraction tools do your auditors utilize on the majority of their engagements? -59% Excel -18% IDEA - 3% InformationActive - 3% CCH Audit Accelerator/Validis - 3% TeamMate Analytics (CCH)</p> <p>-22% None/Not Applicable</p>	61%	78%
<p>15. Audit: What digital tool does your audit team use for scheduling? -51% Excel -13% ProStaff - 3% Outlook - 2% XCM - 2% Thomson Practice CS</p> <p>-24% None/Not Applicable</p>	NEW	76%
<p>16. Audit: What application do your auditors utilize to receive the majority of source documents from clients digitally before the start of an audit? -18% Citrix ShareFile -18% CCH Axxess Portal -11% Thomson Reuters NetClient CS - 9% SuraLink - 4% Safesend</p> <p>-23% None, we do NOT receive the majority of source documents before the start of the audit.</p>	57%	77%
<p>17. Administration: Which tools does your firm utilize to store firm wide information or as an intranet (i.e. personnel manual, best practices and internal firm procedures)? -30% Document Management -11% Microsoft SharePoint - 4% WordPress</p> <p>-33% None, we do not utilize Intranet tools</p>	53%	67%
<p>18. Administration: Does your firm have an electronic document destruction procedure to ensure deletion of outdated electronic files on the network? 60% YES</p>	53%	60%

<p>19. *NEW: Administration: What tool does your firm utilize to provide clients with a self-service payment option on your website?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 9% QuickFee (14 firms) - 6% Affinipay/CPACharge (9 firms) - 5% PayPal (8 firms) -23% Various providers with none more than two responses -57% None, we do not have a sel-service payment option on our website 	NEW	43%
<p>20. Administration: What method does your firm utilize to <i>pay the majority</i> of accounts payables via electronic means?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -22% Credit card for Points/Miles -16% Credit card for Cash Back -11% Bill.com -44% None, we primarily pay vendors via Checks/manual methods 	47%	56%
<p>21. Administration: Does you firm utilize a remote check scanner in your office to deposit client checks? 79% YES</p>	71%	79%
<p>22. Administration: Does your firm deliver digital payroll stubs via secure email or portal? 78% YES</p>	70%	78%
<p>23. Administration: What method does your firm utilize to create and submit digital expense reports to administration?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -29% Practice Management/PDF -23% Excel/Adobe - 3%Expensify - 3% Tallie -34% None, our expense reports are manual 	48%	66%
<p>24. *NEW Administration: What dashboard/digital data analytic tools does your firm utilize for internal report creation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 9% Practice Management - 5% Microsoft Power BI - 3% Excel - 1% Tableau -73% Not applicable; our firm does not use digital dashboards or reporting 	NEW	27%
<p>25. Administration: What digital tool does your firm utilize for managing the recruiting/hiring process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -6% BambooHR -3% ADP -11% Other: i.e. LinkedIn, UltiPro, Indeed, Paycom, Jobvite, Zoho -80% None, our firm does not utilize a digital recruiting tool. 	14%	20%

<p>26. Administration: What digital HR tool does your firm utilize to manage employee evaluations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -4% Bamboo -3% Halogen -3% Trackstar -2% HR Performance Pro -2% ADP -18% Other: i.e. PerformYard, SurveyMonkey Ultipro, Excel <p>-68% None, we do not have a digital tool to manage evaluations</p>	21%	32%
<p>27. Administration: What digital tool does your firm utilize to track CPE compliance?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -28% Practice Management -15% Excel Spreadsheet -11% Thomson Learning/Rewired - 4% Micron CE Manager - 3% CCH CPELink <p>28% None, we do not track CPE via electronic means.</p>	61%	72%
<p>28. Administration: What tool does your firm utilize to store CPE Certificates in a digital format?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -15% Adobe PDF on Network Drive - 8% Thomson Learning/Rewired - 4% Micron CE Manager - 3% CCH CPELink <p>-52% None, we do not store CPE certificates digitally</p>	47%	48%
<p>29. Practice Management: Are the majority of invoices prepared onscreen rather than completed on <i>manual</i> billing sheets? 72% YES</p>	73%	72%
<p>30. Practice Management: Does your firm deliver client invoices electronically? 60% YES</p>	41%	60%
<p>31. NEW: Practice Management: What tool/APIs is your firm primarily utilizing to automate input of client bank statements, invoices, receipts, etc.?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -5% QuickBooks downloads -3% Hubdoc -2% ReceiptBank -2% Expensify <p>-85% None, Not Applicable</p>	NEW	15%
<p>32. Communications: Does your firm provide internet enabled devices (other than smart phones) for senior management working outside the office (i.e. tablets, netbooks, etc.)? 53% YES</p>	32%	53%
<p>33. Communications: Has your firm implemented Unified Messaging Technology for all staff (voice message/integrated fax delivered electronically via email)? 49% YES</p>	35%	49%

<p>34. Communications: What collaboration/instant messaging tool does your firm utilize?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -32% Microsoft Skype for Business (formerly Lync/Office Communicator) - 4%Microsoft Teams/Yammer - 3% Slack - 3% Cisco Jabber - 2% Zoom <p>-44% None, our firm does not utilize a collaboration tool</p>	39%	56%
<p>35. Communications: What video calling/conferencing tool does your firm utilize?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -25% GoToMeeting -19% Microsoft Skype/Yammer -17% Zoom - 3% LifeSize <p>-26% None, we do not utilize video conferencing</p>	47%	74%
<p>36. Technology: How often does your firm backup all firm data to the Internet (web-based storage/archival)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -67% Daily or Work Days - 8% Weekly <p>-19% Not Applicable, we do not backup firm data to the Internet</p>	85%	81%
<p>37. Technology: What Mobile Device Management application has your firm implemented to secure your mobile devices and access to the firm's network?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -42% Exchange/Active Sync - 2% Maas360 - 2% AirWatch - 1% DUO/Firm only allows access via firm issued smart phones (2nd Phone) <p>-39% Not Applicable, we do not utilize any Mobile Device Management tool</p>	50%	61%
<p>38. NEW: Technology: What Multi-Factor Authentication application does your firm utilize to login to the firm's network?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -41% DUO <p>-48% Not Applicable, we do not utilize Multi Factor Authentication</p>	NEW	52%
<p>39. Technology: What remote access tools does your firm utilize to connect to client computers to provide support, training or remote work?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -26% GoToMeeting/Assist -18% LogMeIn - 3% RAS/Remote Assistance - 3% TeamViewer <p>-34% Not Applicable, we do not connect to client computers remotely</p>	60%	66%

Roman Kepczyk presented a webinar outlining the results of the survey and how your firm can integrate them on December 17, 2018, which is available to members, [here](#).

Roman H. Kepczyk, CPA.CITP, PAFM is the Director of Firm Technology Strategy for Right Networks 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 2019 Paperless Benchmark Survey and CPAFMA 2018 Information Technology Survey.