

RESOLVE WORKFLOW & EFFICIENCY CHALLENGES, AND PROCESSES JEOPARDIZING DATA SECURITY

- ✓ Managing Workflow
- ✓ Data Security

2015

2016

2017

2018

WITH INSIGHTS FROM INDUSTRY THOUGHT-LEADERS:



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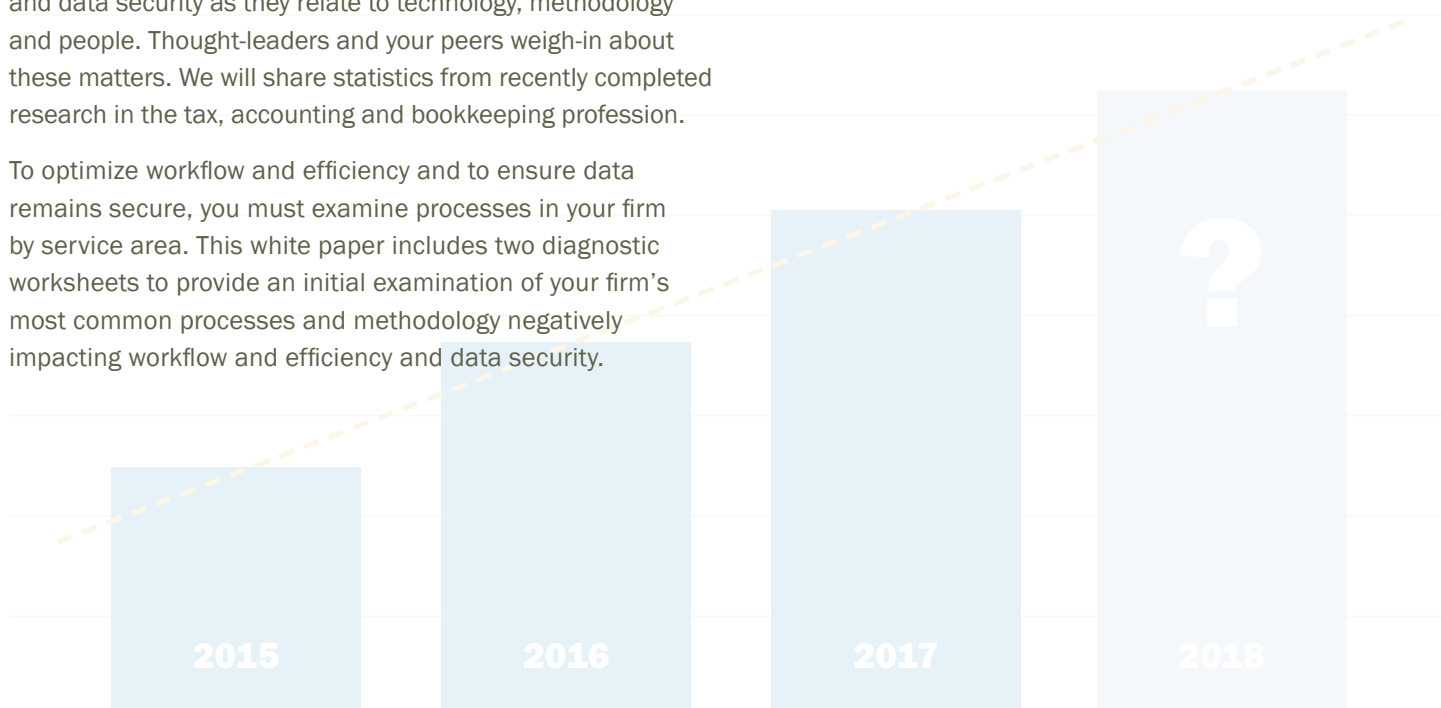
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research in the tax, accounting and bookkeeping profession has revealed workflow and efficiency and data security are the most common firm management concerns for practitioners. The processes at work in your firm result in workflow and impact the security of data.

Although all firms gather, process, store and deliver documents, it is the combination of the firm's people, methodology and technology that impact whether workflow is optimized and data remains secure. The challenge in resolving these issues is knowing with certainty where processes can be improved and identifying methodology that jeopardizes data security.

In this white paper we will discuss workflow and efficiency and data security as they relate to technology, methodology and people. Thought-leaders and your peers weigh-in about these matters. We will share statistics from recently completed research in the tax, accounting and bookkeeping profession.

To optimize workflow and efficiency and to ensure data remains secure, you must examine processes in your firm by service area. This white paper includes two diagnostic worksheets to provide an initial examination of your firm's most common processes and methodology negatively impacting workflow and efficiency and data security.



MANAGING WORKFLOW

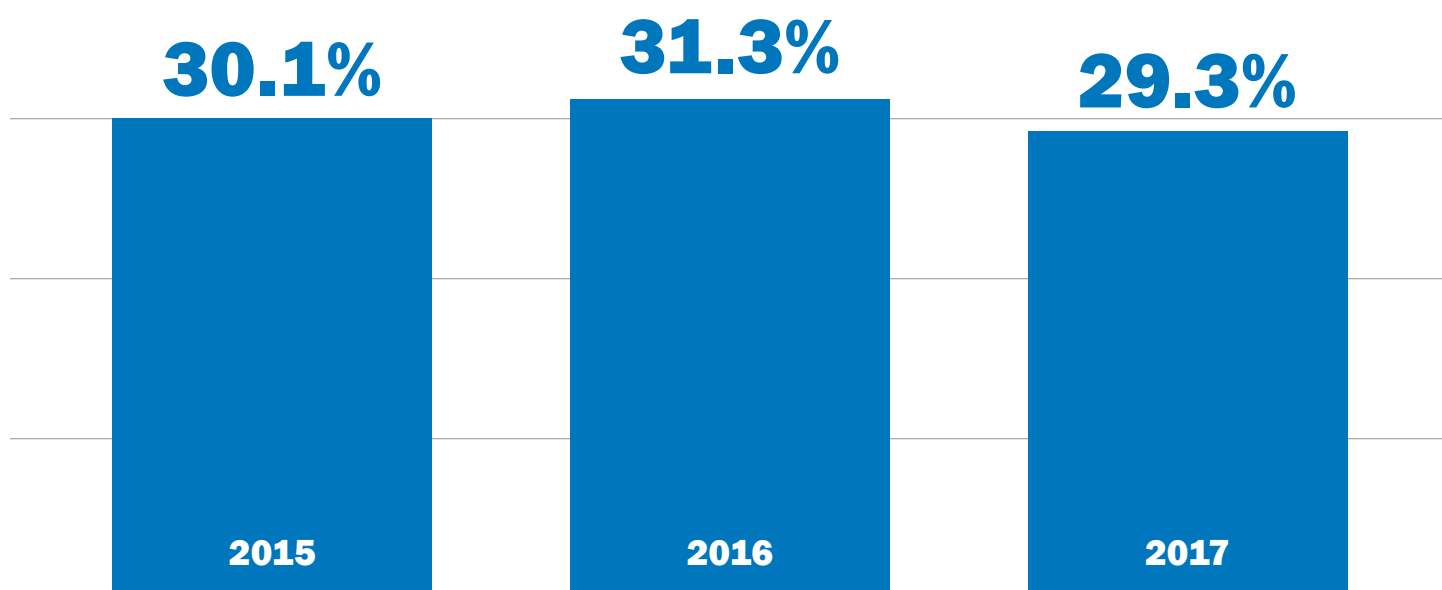
Results from the 4th Annual Accounting Firm Operations and Technology (AFOT) Survey are in; since 2015 nearly 30 percent of tax professionals, accountants and bookkeepers have identified managing workflow as one of the biggest challenges of managing a firm.

Optimizing workflow is a complex and ongoing process made easy with the right workflow software and software implementation expert who specializes in the accounting

profession. There is no universal workflow tool that can be plugged in and instantly optimize workflow; workflow software worth implementing will be engineered for the accounting profession and require customization based on technology, people and processes by service area. Workflow will also need to be adjusted periodically as the firm evolves.

MANAGING WORKFLOW CONTINUES TO BE A LEADING CHALLENGE

Since 2015, MANAGING WORKFLOW has been repeatedly identified by approximately 30 percent of accountants, tax professionals and bookkeepers as one of the biggest firm management challenges.



Source: 4th Annual Accounting Firm Operations and Technology Survey

Resolving workflow challenges begins with the implementation of workflow software

Managing workflow continues to surface year after year as a leading practice management challenge; firms have not found a solution that works. The AFOT Survey data reveals why this challenge has not been resolved; only 27.7 percent of firms use workflow software today. Unless firms struggling with this challenge adopt and implement workflow software that is engineered for the accounting profession and customizable pre- and post-implementation, workflow and efficiency challenges will continue to impact nearly 75 percent of all firms.

Further examination shows that 46% of firms will continue to have workflow-related issues because they are not using any workflow software tools. Another 26% are using software tools that are not workflow software to complete workflow tasks; these firms will continue to be challenged by workflow as they experience ongoing product limitations. A workflow system allows you to define custom workflow processes for every type of engagement, enables establishing manual and automated due-dates, gives you an ability to track & report on budgeted time versus time spent and provides a means for easy collaboration and communication between team members and allows for the real-time monitoring of all work. Most importantly, at the core of every engagement are your source documents and deliverables. With Doc.It Workflow these documents are directly and automatically linked to the engagements you are tracking.

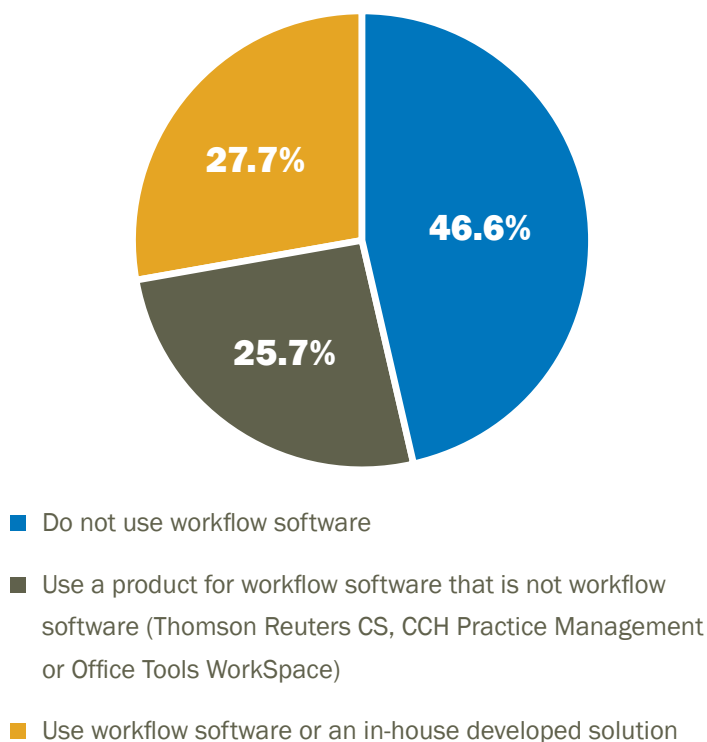
If your firm is challenged by workflow and efficiency or wondering if processes can be optimized further, now is the time to investigate customizable workflow software engineered for the accounting profession.

Implementation of workflow software is a complex but manageable process that begins with knowing your people, technology and processes for each service area. Doc.It Workflow software ensures the right people are assigned tasks according to any number of factors such as availability, skill set, cost, client familiarity and workload, due dates or more. Workflow software ensures processes are always followed and

bottlenecks resolved or proactively avoided by an administrator or manager overseeing the flow of work and project due dates.

Implementation of workflow software is not the end-all. As the firm and its technology and resources evolve, it is reasonable to expect workflow to evolve. For example, the optimal workflow of tax returns or audits today may be different a few years from now for a number of reasons such as new or advanced technology, personnel changes, merger or acquisition or partners retiring. Or, if any of your documents are stored as paper or in multiple places, when you become completely digital processes will change.

WHAT IS YOUR FIRM'S WORKFLOW SOLUTION?



Source: 4th Annual Accounting Firm Operations and Technology Survey

THOUGHT-LEADERS WEIGH IN:

“Why is it important to resolve challenges with workflow and efficiency?”



Jim Boomer

CEO, Boomer Consulting, Inc.

Optimized processes and workflow are critical to a firm's success. How the work gets done and flows through the process determines the firm's level of profitability and the client's level of satisfaction.

When the right technology supplements an optimized process, it leads to greater automation, elimination of waste and amazing results.



Randy Johnston

Chairman and CEO, Network Management Group, Inc.

Handling documents easily and quickly as they arrive at the firm, throughout the work processes, as well as during delivery to clients improves firm realization and effectiveness. Workflows in firms should be simple and controlled processes, particularly mission critical due dates. If the firm's workloads are heavy, using scheduling tools to take advantage of available personnel matching their skills to the work at hand can be a time saver, too. As our professional teams and clients become more mobile, accessing documents remotely or from mobile devices can address questions conveniently preventing re-work upon return to the office. One final benefit to a good workflow system is management control when things don't quite go as expected, since project status can be conveniently monitored at all times.



Ward Blatch

K2 Canada

Mobile device access to information allows today's mobile workforce to rapidly respond to client inquiries from anywhere. It also means that people can work from nearly anywhere with secure access to the same information regardless of whether they are at the office, home, or at a client's. Doc.It not only provides this access to information it also includes workflow. Workflow allows you to see the status of work in process, assign tasks, and complete the work on time as efficiently as possible. The end result is happier clients and a happier team.

What do your peers have to say about Doc.It Workflow?

BUTTLE AND TAVANO

Our entire focus as a firm is to provide awesome customer service. The biggest benefit and the main reason we adopted Doc.It are for the productivity gains through Doc.It's Workflow. One of my key performance indicators is quick project turnaround. Doc.It Workflow has assured we achieve this. With Doc.It we bill faster and as a consequence, collect faster.

LECKIE & ASSOCIATES, LLP

With Doc.It our workflow has changed and sped processes so more of the work is accomplished on the front-end which means a lot of the work is done upfront resulting in a faster close to tax season. An additional improvement since the adoption of Doc.It has been our ability to respond to client requests immediately; the increase in this area has been dramatic. We have eliminated nearly all of the call-back situations because client information is at our fingertips at any time.



The benefits of implementing workflow software

For every service area there is an ideal optimal workflow. Customizable workflow software ensures the firm-defined process in each service area is followed resulting in many benefits. Optimized workflow ensures the most efficient and effective use of resources and technology resulting in your firm experiencing many or all of the most common benefits experienced by firms using Doc.It Workflow.

Top 10 Benefits of Implementing Doc.It Workflow

1. All documents are always, anywhere and anytime, at your fingertips.
2. Work tasks are automatically scheduled.
3. Work tasks automatically populate for staff member or partner(s).
4. When a task is complete the work automatically flows to the next person.
5. All waiting, idle time, or time spent determining the next task to start on is eliminated.
6. Monitoring workflow will result in resolving bottlenecks before they occur.
7. Work can be instantly monitored and tasks rerouted for any reason to ensure deadlines are always met.
8. Reporting reveals budget versus actual time and resources spent.
9. No need to ask colleagues where documents are or project status.
10. Working offsite or from home is easy when all information is accessible.

Diagnostic Worksheet: General Matters Causing Workflow Challenges

Completion of this diagnostic worksheet is a first step to understanding general areas where workflow improvements and efficiency gains can be made. Doc.It clients using Doc.It Workflow undergo a detailed audit of processes, technology and resources to define optimal workflow by service area.

The first step to optimizing workflow is to identify general processes and methodology fueling inefficiency in your firm. Answering “YES” to any of the following questions identifies areas to discuss in a discovery call with Doc.It.

YES	NO	DO ANY OF THESE STATEMENTS DEFINE YOUR FIRM?
☐	☐	Scheduling is done in Excel.
☐	☐	Workflows are on white boards or taped to the wall.
☐	☐	Due dates are determined manually.
☐	☐	Tax season requires making room in storage for more paper files.
☐	☐	Staff does not have access to project-related email.
☐	☐	Documents are misfiled or may require you to leave your desk to locate them.
☐	☐	When staff is out-of-office, they may need to be contacted to locate documents.
☐	☐	Checking on the status of a job will require leaving your desk or checking with another person.
☐	☐	Tasks get missed and cause a “domino effect” of missed tasks by other staff.
☐	☐	When a client calls with a question, it is more common to require a search for an answer and call back the client versus answering the question on the spot
☐	☐	Some staff get substantially more work than others because it is difficult to gauge work volume.
☐	☐	Due dates have been missed.
☐	☐	Processes are handled differently depending on who is handling the work.
☐	☐	It is not easy to identify and resolve workflow bottlenecks.
☐	☐	It is not easy to move a client from one partner to the next for several reason (e.g. naming and filing conventions are not standard and processes are not standard).
☐	☐	We struggle with lack of accountability and transparency on completed work.

DATA SECURITY

In the recently released 4th Annual Accounting Firm Operations and Technology Survey, more than 50 percent of tax, accounting and bookkeeping professionals identified data security and risk management as their biggest challenge.

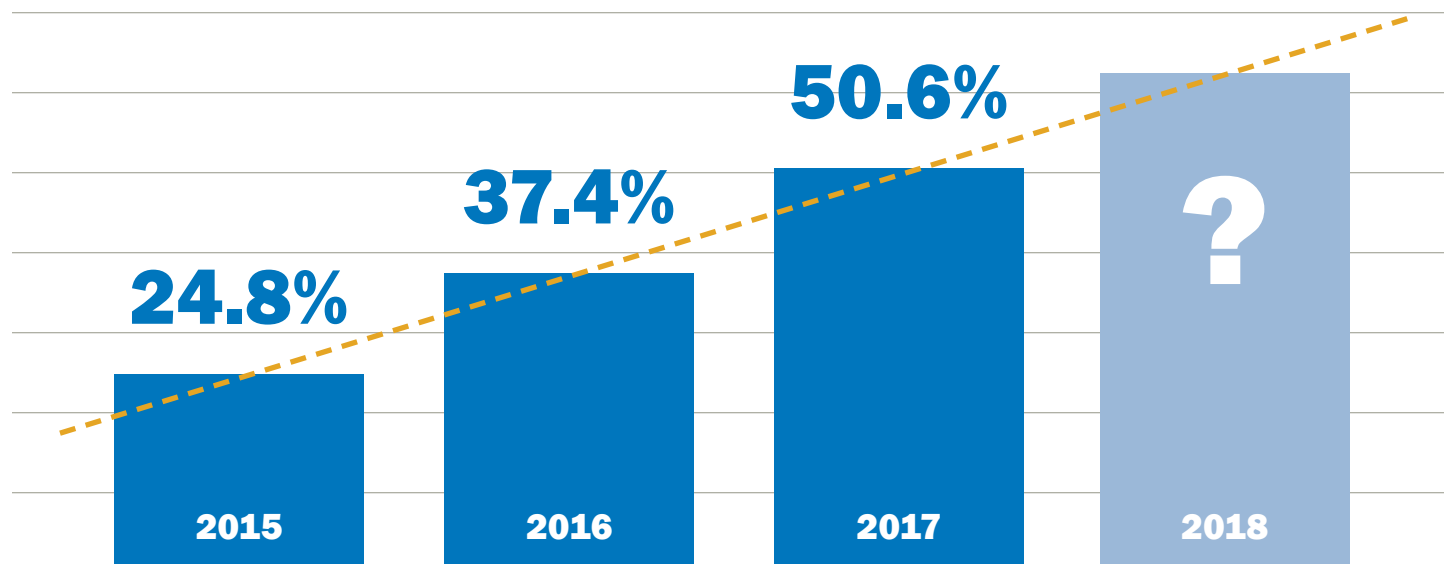
Clients expect you to keep their data secure while you have it and properly dispose of it when it is no longer needed. Concern about data security and risk management is justified; the legal ramifications of a security breach, losing documents or keeping them beyond their retention period can be devastating for your clients and your firm.

Keeping data secure today requires much more than ensuring the paper file room door is locked and a server firewall is in

place. Surprisingly, in a profession where being detail-oriented is required and the work product is highly regulated, many practitioners still gather, process, store and deliver documents using methodology that greatly jeopardizes document security and elevates risk.

Security risks can be identified quickly as you examine how your firm manages documents from the point at which they are initially gathered until they have reached the end of their retention period.

FIRMS IDENTIFY SECURITY AND RISK MANAGEMENT AS THE BIGGEST TECHNOLOGY ISSUES



Source: 4th Annual Accounting Firm Operations and Technology Survey

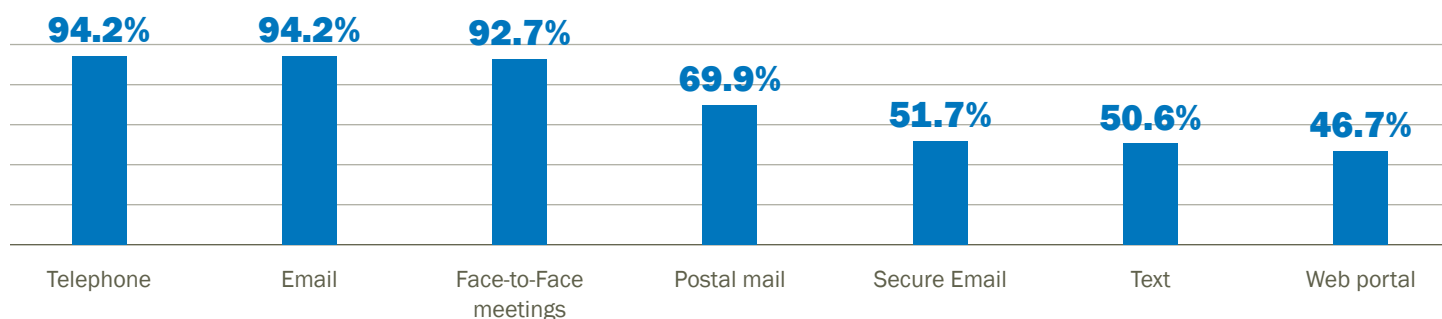
Identify the greatest risks to data security as you gather, process, store and deliver documents

Regardless of how documents arrive at the firm it is your responsibility to keep them secure while they are in your possession. You are no longer held accountable for document security after the document has reached the end of its retention period and it is destroyed.

Documents arrive via postal mail and digital files transmitted in a number of ways such as email, fax, and web portal or

secure file share. Email is one of the leading ways firms communicate with clients. The 4th Annual AFOT Survey reveals practitioners are using email just as frequently as they are using the telephone to communicate with clients. Some of the highest risk practices include exchanging documents via non-secure email or using any portable storage device (USB drive, CD, external hard drive, etc.).

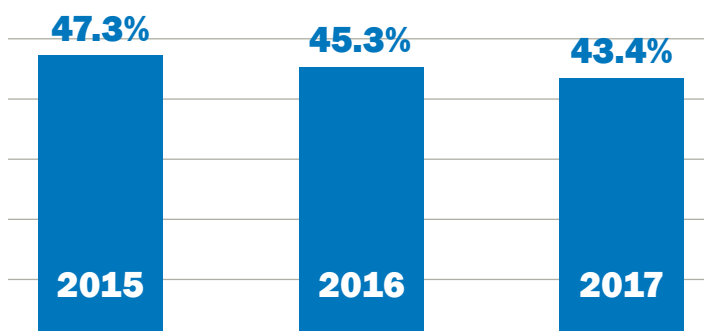
METHODS USED TO COMMUNICATE WITH CLIENTS



Source: 3rd Annual Accounting Firm Operations and Technology Survey

Practitioners admit heavy reliance on email as the top means of communication with clients, yet admittedly, email is not being managed well. More than 43 percent of practitioners admit their biggest email challenge is archiving, retention and retrieval compliance.

OUR BIGGEST EMAIL CHALLENGE IS ARCHIVING, RETENTION AND RETRIEVAL COMPLIANCE

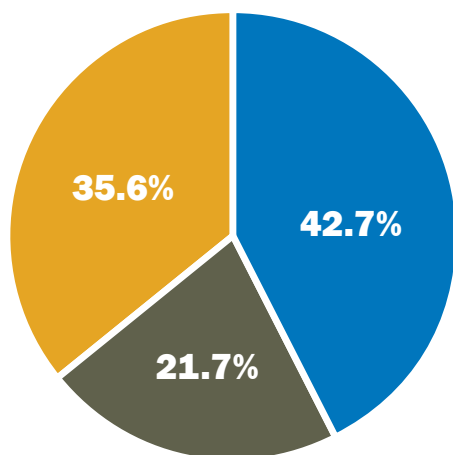


Source: 4th Annual Accounting Firm Operations and Technology Survey

If you would like to mitigate risk and guarantee everyone follows company process and policy to ensure data remains secure, now is the time to investigate Doc.It Suite, document management software (DMS). The same can be said for resolving the challenge of email archiving, retaining and retrieval compliance. DMS will apply the firm's naming standards and document retention policy by document type while providing a well-organized digital secure workspace, tools to ensure secure access and exchange of documents with clients (e.g. web portals), workflow and secure document storage. Access control, encrypted back-up from a 3rd party back-up software and document retention policy for purging digital files will further insulate the firm from risk.

Surprisingly, more than 64 percent of all firms admit they do not have a document retention policy for purging digital files or they have one but do not follow it. Federal and state judicial rules for civil and criminal procedure as well as local precedents dictate document retention policy. Keeping documents beyond their retention period adds unnecessary risk. For example, there may be a data breach or the firm may be summoned into a legal case or required to produce documents that are not archived in a way that makes retrieval possible or efficient.

DOES YOUR FIRM HAVE A DOCUMENT RETENTION POLICY FOR PURGING DIGITAL FILES?



- No / None
- Yes, but it is not followed
- Yes

Source: 4th Annual Accounting Firm Operations and Technology Survey

34.7%

REPLACE THEIR DESKTOP OR LAPTOP COMPUTERS AS-NEEDED.

If documents are stored on your desktop or laptop and it is not replaced in a 2-5 year cycle and backed-up daily to a separate device or in the cloud, the security of your data is at risk.

Source: 4th Annual Accounting Firm Operations and Technology Survey

33.9%

USE WIFI FOR WIRELESS ACCESS OUTSIDE OF THE OFFICE.

Public WiFi is inherently insecure. Hackers, malware and other threats pose security risks for the firm. A bad actor can easily deliver malware or intercept your communications and get access to your usernames and passwords when you use public WiFi.

Source: 4th Annual Accounting Firm Operations and Technology Survey

THOUGHT-LEADERS WEIGH IN:

“Why is it important to mitigate risk to ensure data security?”



Jim Boomer

CEO, Boomer Consulting, Inc.

Today's digital world is an exciting one with opportunities to connect, share and collaborate in ways we never imagined. At the same time, today's environment can be quite scary. It seems that every time we look at the news, there is another major security breach.

As CPAs, we are entrusted with some of our clients' most sensitive data placing a major responsibility on the firm to do everything possible to keep the data secure. Firms can't afford to use technology solutions that don't put data security at the top of their priority list.



Randy Johnston

Chairman and CEO, Network Management Group, Inc.

CPA firms have a tremendous amount of confidential client information in their possession; bad actors want access to this data.

In addition to protecting client information while it is in the firm's possession, it is important to dispose of information when it is no longer needed. Following a records retention policy minimizes firm and partner liability.

When you are considering your firm's data security approach, you should look for tools that provide adequate protection without being too complex or time consuming for your team members to use. Documents should be encrypted while at rest and in transit, so a secure portal for delivery is your front line of defense. Further, any system you use should control who can access documents, as well as control who can copy and modify documents. One final caution for the security of your documents: make sure that documents are backed up regularly and that the backup is encrypted as well.



Ward Blatch

K2 Canada

Today's privacy acts reinforce the need for accounting firms to maintain control over client data. This includes implementing data loss prevention, secure file storage and secure transfer of data with their clients. The risks to a firm are high if proper security and procedures are not maintained. Doc.It has the tools your firm needs to properly implement data security in your firm.

What do your peers have to say about data security and the mitigation of risk as it relates to using Doc.It?

WEILER & COMPANY

We use Doc.It to address our firm's biggest concerns; long-term archive storage that stores documents in a non-proprietary PDF format and for secure file transfer.

WOODMAN WHITE OLSEN & CO. LLP

Using Doc.It has resulted in our firm being well-organized and we now have consistent application of policy and document retention.

PRIMARY SOFTWARE USED IN THIS FIRM

Doc.It® Suite
CaseWare
CCH Tax Prep

27

Doc.It® licenses

PRIMARY SOFTWARE USED IN THIS FIRM

Doc.It® Suite
CaseWare
Profile/Intuit Tax
Jazzit

20

Doc.It® licenses

URISH POPECK & CO, LLP

Using Doc.It has positively impacted our ability to back-up data and have copies of client records electronically; we are dramatically more secure. We continue to reduce the risk of having to recreate files if something happens with offsite storage.

LECKIE & ASSOCIATES, LLP

The adoption of Doc.It has resulted in less risk of a document being misfiled, overwritten with changes or accidentally deleted.

PRIMARY SOFTWARE USED IN THIS FIRM

Doc.It® Suite
CaseWare
CCH ProSystem fx
Peachtree & QuickBooks

60

Doc.It® licenses

PRIMARY SOFTWARE USED IN THIS FIRM

Doc.It® Suite
CaseWare
CCH TaxPrep
CaseWare Time

43

Doc.It® licenses

Diagnostic Worksheet: General Practices Risking Data Security

Completion of this diagnostic worksheet is a first step to understanding general areas where risk can be mitigated. Doc.It Suite clients undergo a detailed audit of processes, technology and resources to ensure the firm is insulated from risk to data security.

The first step to resolving security risks is to identify processes and methodology that risk data security. Answering “YES” to any of the following statements identifies areas to address in a discovery call with Doc.It.

YES	NO	DO ANY OF THESE STATEMENTS DEFINE YOUR FIRM?
☐	☐	We use a CD-ROM, DVD or USB flash drive to deliver clients' tax return or large files (e.g. client hand you their QuickBooks file on a USB flash drive).
☐	☐	We use email to exchange documents internally, with clients or external parties.
☐	☐	You have a web portal, but staff, accountants, partners and clients are not consistently using it.
☐	☐	Access to client data is not gated (access credentials are not required).
☐	☐	Digital document storage lacks retention policies/standards, or policies are in place but not followed consistently.
☐	☐	USB thumb drive or removable hard drive is used as a primary backup system.
☐	☐	Lack of clear process/policy to ensure all data is scrubbed from retiring technology (computers, smart phones, copier/fax, scanners, USB flash drives, CD-ROM, DVD).
☐	☐	We have no policy, or are not following policy, regarding email archiving, retrieval and retention.
☐	☐	We do not back-up data daily in multiple locations.
☐	☐	People who work for the firm are allowed to use public Wi-Fi for their connection to email or back-to-the-office.
☐	☐	We have lost a stored document.
☐	☐	It is likely we have documents in our possession that have reached the end of their retention period but have not been destroyed.
☐	☐	We do not have a plan for disaster recovery.
☐	☐	We do not encrypt emails or add passwords on documents.
☐	☐	We do not have compliancy requirements for where and how data is stored.
☐	☐	We do not have a purge plan for paper documents.

A MESSAGE FROM THE TEAM AT DOC.IT

Accounting and tax practices using Doc.It Suite, an integrated document management, workflow and document storage solution, are best positioned to resolve workflow and efficiency issues and mitigate risk associated with keeping data secure. Doc.It Suite creates added value for clients by enabling the firm to more efficiently serve and respond to clients' needs. Documents are always where they are supposed to be and instantly accessible, processes are standardized, and workload and due dates are measured and monitored.

We welcome a discussion with you or your partner responsible for technology, IT Manager, partner group, shareholder(s). Within a few minutes we will know whether further exploration of Doc.It Suite is worth your investment of time.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

PRODUCT INFORMATION

- [Doc.It Family of Products](#)
- [Doc.It integration](#)

ARTICLES:

- [Securely Sharing Client Documents: It's Time to Consider a Portal](#)
- [4 Ways Client Tax Documents are at Risk](#)
- [ROI: The Cost of DMS and Workflow Software](#)
- [Top 10 Questions – Streamlining Document Management and Workflow](#)

VIDEOS:

- [Suite and feature overview](#) videos (1 minute each)
- [Doc.It Suite, Brief video overview](#) (15 minutes)
- [UK Presentation: Optimizing Workflow and Document Management Efficiency](#) (1 hr.)

FIRM IN THE SPOTLIGHT:

- [An interview with Judi Sovanski, Firm Administrator, BWTP, PC.](#)

Are you ready to address workflow and efficiency challenges, or take steps to ensure data security?

CONTACT Doc.It

