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website that validates and explains the certificate. Badges can be used with any online communication like websites, email signatures, resumes and LinkedIn profiles.

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Accounting & Audit



Digital Badges Are Here. Will You Earn Yours?

By Clar Rosso

Have you ever met an accountant who didn't display their professional certificate in a place of honor in their office? Neither have I. As a profession, CPAs, Chartered Global Management Accountants (CGMAs) and holders of specialty credentials are proud of acing exams that require deep knowledge and ability.

Hanging a certificate on a wall is no longer enough, though. It doesn't showcase your expertise to a wide breadth of clients, prospects or potential employers in a location where they are most likely to view it: online, in digital format.

And it doesn't demonstrate the commitment to lifelong learning that today's knowledge economy demands. Although CPAs, CGMAs and other accounting professionals are required to refresh and expand their expertise with continuing education, a certificate earned years ago doesn't give the public specific assurance that you've stayed current on the important skills valued now.

That's why professionals are turning to digital badges. Still in their infancy, digital badges recognize professional accomplishments, such as the completion of a project or the mastery of a skill.

A visible way to showcase your expertise

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doesn't fulfill the requirements to maintain the badge, it disappears.

Many organizations issue digital badges as a way to recognize less formal education and skills gathering. They also gamify the learning process.

Khan Academy, the global online learning platform, for example, offers a digital badging program in various educational subjects. Students watch a series of videos that collectively make up a course, and answer questions along the way to identify strengths and gaps in knowledge. Learners must demonstrate a specific level of understanding and competency in a subject before a badge is awarded, and different badges are issued based on varying levels of mastery.

On a lesser scale, the Google News program offers participants a chance to earn badges if they read a certain number of articles in a particular content area. Participants can raise the level of their badge from bronze to silver to gold if they do more reading. It's a bit like earning scouting badges, just in digital form.

Numerous applications

As you can imagine, the American Institute of CPAs' digital badge program is quite a bit more involved. Now available for the Single Audit, Employee Benefit Plans Audit and Not-for-Profit certificate programs, digital badges highlight relevant skills and the effort it takes to acquire them.

For example, managers and partners of Heinfeld Meech – a CPA consultancy in Tucson, Ariz., known for governmental single audits – recently received their advanced single audit certification. After passing the rigorous exam, these CPAs are using their digital badges in email signatures, website resumes and even when submitting requests for proposals.

“It definitely shows that you’ve gone above and beyond what your profession

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For employers, digital badges provide a more detailed, nuanced view of job candidates. Badges can give insight not only into what candidates know, but also their commitment to acquiring new skills and accomplishments.

In today’s economy, skills and proficiency are fluid. It’s no longer enough to have a diploma or certificate on the wall. Knowledge workers need to demonstrate lifelong learning. And now, there’s a way for the public to know if they are meeting the challenge.

Clar Rosso is Vice President of Member Learning and Competency at the American Institute of CPAs.

Top Accounting & Audit Social Media and Blog Posts:

Financial Statement changes: 5 Steps for Boards. AICPA Insights.

<http://bit.ly/2yhqdE2>

Today’s CFO Deals with Dizzying Array of Tasks. Grant Thornton Blog. <http://gt-us.co/2x7IO0e>

A Look Ahead at the Audit Profession. Cathy Engelbert. <http://bit.ly/2yBgF2G>

Top 7 Financial Skills for Financial Planning & Analysis. Tom Hood. <http://bit.ly/2wrosiT>

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AICPA-Accountemps Scholarship Winners Announced. The award provides financial assistance to four undergraduate and graduate-level accounting students who demonstrate potential to become leaders in the CPA profession.

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Outsourced CFO Services Get Boost from MACPA. That community now includes the MACPA's new Outsourced CFO Task Force, a group of forward-thinking MACPA members who are interested in promoting outsourced CFO services.

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Accountants Optimistic on Economy. 75% of the respondents using cloud storage and application technology indicated they are "very confident" about the future of accounting and their respective role in the industry.

<http://cpapracticeadvisor.com/12370486>

8 Factors Affecting Innovation for Financial Firms. The rise of customer choice will have profound implications on the design and distribution of products, and will likely force companies to shift roles. <http://cpapracticeadvisor.com/12368518>

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