

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

needs. When employees find themselves wasting too much time on common tasks such as locating and sharing files, they look for alternatives to the company-provided toolsets.

Jul. 22, 2015



In his article, [“The Accountant and Cyber Security: 5 Actions Your Firm Must Take,”](#) Andrew Cravenho cites some of the most recent examples of cyber attacks that have hit big-name companies and government agencies. He goes on to recommend steps that should be taken by CPAs, since it would be a mistake to “place your data at risk by making the assumption that you are too small to be targeted.”

It would be an even bigger mistake to focus on these comparatively rare external

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

However, a closer look uncovers a widespread problem. Unsanctioned employee use of file sharing and sync solutions without management approval and without IT oversight is becoming a widespread issue. In a recent [survey by M-Files](#), hundreds of professionals were asked about their file-sharing behaviors. Almost half (46 percent) admitted to using personal file-sharing apps to store business documents containing confidential or sensitive information.

When asked about the official company policies for file sharing, 70 percent of respondents reported a lack of a policy or a lack of knowledge of such a policy. Clearly the use of these apps by employees is going unchecked and unmonitored, and as a result, many firms are experiencing negative consequences from these unsanctioned behaviors, which range from loss of control of documents to information security breaches, data losses and non-compliance issues.

Mitigating the Risks

The proliferation of unsanctioned file-sharing app usage at work points to unmet needs. When employees find themselves wasting too much time on common tasks such as locating and sharing files, they look for alternatives to the company-provided toolsets. Ongoing and open communications between practice managers, technology support teams, individual accountants and office support staff can determine the shortcomings that employees must overcome, and simultaneously provide an opportunity to raise awareness about the risks associated with unsanctioned file-sharing apps and services.

A formal policy for file sharing can then be defined based on staff discussions and the CPA firm's goals for securing and controlling content as well as for collaborating on information assets with those outside of the firm. Sharing this policy with the firm's

partners, suppliers and clients can also further encourage behaviors that support the

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

Fortunately, leading enterprise information management (EIM) solutions can provide the control and security management wants, with the simplicity that employees demand. Documented use cases from numerous CPA firms have demonstrated that the right content management solution can balance flexible access with greatly improved content security to simultaneously satisfy employees and the firm's management teams.

Added Benefits that Promote Change

Best-in-class EIM solutions offer many features that can significantly benefit accounting practices. Compared to traditional folder-based file management approaches, metadata-driven EIM solutions ensure that a single, central copy of each information asset is always found in the right context and that it is protected with appropriate security and access controls. With metadata, it is also easy to determine the content classes that can be shared with external parties via the cloud, while ensuring that certain classes of classified information assets are always kept behind the on-premises firewall.

The new paradigms for organizing and accessing digital information are also facilitating the automation of processes. Email-driven processes are being replaced with faster and more visible information-centric workflows for the approvals of documents. For example, an accountant posts a revised contract for review and approval on Dropbox and then emails it to others for review and approval. However, some recipients may save different versions of the document back to Dropbox after they review it, and then it becomes a guessing game of "which file is the correct and current version?"

However, this entire workflow process can be managed much more effectively and precisely via an EIM solution. A single version is provided to the review team in a

very controlled and secure environment. Reviews and approvals are managed within

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

Mika Javanainen is Senior Director of Product Management at [M-Files Corporation](#). Javanainen is in charge of managing and developing M-Files product portfolio, roadmaps and pricing globally. Prior to his executive roles, Javanainen worked as a systems specialist, where he integrated document management systems with ERP and CRM applications. A published author, Javanainen has an executive MBA in International Business and Marketing.

Accounting • Technology

CPA Practice Advisor is registered with the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) as a sponsor of continuing professional education on the National Registry of CPE Sponsors.

© 2024 Firmworks, LLC. All rights reserved