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engagements. As with any armory, the accountant need only select the right...

Dave McClure • Jul. 27, 2015



Every road warrior has a set of technology solutions that are preferred for travel, based on identified needs and personal preferences. The needs of accountants, however, vary according to where the client is located. Local travel offers the opportunity to carry more technology with you that can simply be carried in the trunk of your car. Long distance travel by air, with the punitive cost of baggage and carry-on items, will require some edits to the list.

The basic set of technologies to consider as essential are getting smaller and lighter each year, to the point that they are now feasible for both in-office and traveling

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in trying to capture more than a page or two of information. The current generation of smartphone-based and “personal” scanners simply don’t have the speed and durability a client engagement requires. What is needed is a fast, misfeed correcting, duplex scanner.

- Scanner software to organize the data. To eliminate the need for double entry of documents, have a scanner technology system can automatically organize the data and place it in appropriate books, suitable for transmission to both the client and the accountant’s storage system.
- A spare monitor. While the industry has yet to produce the low-cost, paper-thin monitors that were promised a few years ago, there is no shortage of decent monitors that weigh in at four pounds or less and won’t break the bank. The second monitor can serve as a backup, or provide a second screen for those adept at multi-screen accounting.
- An array of patch cords. The list should include:
 - A USB extender cord of 6’ or more.
 - A USB hub. There are never enough USB ports, and a four-port hub can solve this problem in a small-footprint box.
 - An HDMI to Mini-HDMI cord. This is useful both for watching movies from Netflix on the hotel’s flat-screen and for using that television as monitor.
 - Three chargers that can handle the majority of devices on this list. One should be a car charger, the second a wall outlet charger, and the third a backup wall outlet charger.
- Electrical conversion kit. Only required for international travel, these conversion sets will prove invaluable to the traveler who may be called upon to shift to a client engagement in another country with no time to stop at home – or may make a

multi-country tour of clients. A good set will cost about \$12, but avoid the very

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Businesses today, use a more secure cellular Wi-Fi. Most modern smartphones now have a wifi hotspot/router capability built-in, but “air card” solutions are also available.

- A portable cellular router. At this rate, a cellular router will pay for itself in just a few days. Either way, refuse to pay exorbitant prices for such an essential service as Wi-Fi.
- Three mass-storage devices. This may be portable hard drives, SD cards or USB thumb drives, but should be available in 16 Gb, 32 Gb and 64 Gb. This will enable the collection or sharing of information without undue expense.
- A portable printer. When working out of the office, it is neither cost-effective nor secure to use the hotel printer for anything – including boarding passes for the flight home. The couple of pounds needed to carry a functional printer are more than worth the additional security they provide for client and personal data.

As the profession continues to evolve from manual to automated systems, the technology needed for client engagements must feature greater comfort and security.

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Q: Well, I'll hazard I can do more damage on my laptop sitting in my pajamas before my first cup of Earl Grey than you can do in a year in the field.

James Bond: Oh, so why do you need me?

Q: Every now and then a trigger has to be pulled.

James Bond: Or not pulled. It's hard to know which in your pajamas, Q.

–Secret Service armorer “Q” to James Bond in Skyfall

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