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How you get things done is increasingly becoming as important as what you actually do, especially in a multi-service professional practice. As individual tasks turn into a dynamic workflow process, finding ways to streamline the individual components of this workflow can lead to dramatic time savings, a.k.a. productivity enhancement. And saved time is certainly a quantifiable asset, allowing professionals to spend more time on billable (or at least higher-billable) work.

Another key component adding to modern workflow challenges is the increase in mobile computing needs. Whether for business, pleasure or a combination, accounting professionals are traveling more and require convenient access to their client and business data, in forms that are amenable to limited carryon bags and attaché cases. Finding the right tools to most efficiently service clients and manage a practice can be a daunting task, whether you spend your time in the office or on the road. This special feature gives an overview of some recently introduced technologies that can give you that added productivity edge, wherever you are.

MONITORS

**DoubleSight Displays DS 1700S (17-inch units); DS 1900S (19-inch units):
\$700-\$800**

By now, most professionals know a peer or colleague with multiple monitors on their desktop and, if they don't have one too, they're jealous.

Multiple monitors provide an instant productivity boost, allowing the user to

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Shuttle

Computers, Inc. Model: From \$295

Hardcore gamers who go to LAN parties have known of Shuttle Computers for a few years, but the company's travel-oriented monitors are finally catching the eye of mobile professionals, especially those who are used to working with two screens back at the office. The Shuttle XP17 Lite (<http://global.shuttle.com>) is an uber-stylish portable 17-inch monitor that can be easily added to a laptop that supports multiple screens (most newer models do), providing an excellent option when giving a presentation where there is no projection system. The XP17 can also be used with traditional PC workstations, but its greatest assets are in its portability. The company also offers a protective travel bag.

SCANNING

Epson GT-2500 Business Workgroup Scanner: \$599

As a central component of the modern paperless practice, a scanner's speed and reliability have never been more important. With 1200dpi resolution and 48-bit color, the compact Epson (www.epson.com) GT-2500 is geared for small business networks or can be used as a stand-alone with PCs or Macs. It offers one-click scanning of both sides of documents up to legal size, and comes with a 50-sheet automatic document feeder.

Fujitsu

ScanSnap S300 Color Mobile Scanner: \$295

Fujitsu's ScanSnap (www.scansnap.com)

line of scanners has been wowing professionals for a few years now, providing one-click instant PDF creation of documents, along with electronic document

management functions that include impressive bookmarking and search capabilities.

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HP Color LaserJet 2800 All-in-One Series: From \$699

The quality and convenience of laser color and black-and-white (BW) printing used to be out of reach for all but the largest offices, but with HP's (www.hp.com) 2800 All-in-One multi-function device, professionals can get a cost-effective and reliable network-ready system capable of high-volume printing, copying, scanning and faxing. The workhorse can produce draft-quality BW printing at up to 35 pages per minute and has a maximum monthly duty cycle of up to 30,000 pages. With multiple print trays, the printer/copier can hold 750 sheets. The built-in 1200dpi flatbed scanner includes a 50-sheet automatic document feeder. Optional wireless networking is also available. For offices not requiring a laser printer, the \$499 HP OfficeJet Pro L7700 All-in-One offers similar features and capabilities.

Samsung

ML-2851ND B/W Laser Printer: From \$190

Combining power, style and an attractive price, this sleek, network-ready Samsung (www.samsung.com) printer is tailored to the needs of smaller networked office environments, providing fast (28 ppm), high-quality (1200dpi) monochrome output. It also offers some high-end features like duplex printing and comes with a 250-sheet feed tray. The ML-2851 not only works hard, it looks good, too.

Dell Color Laser Printer 1320c: From \$299

With a compact design that fits on an active desktop, the Dell's (www.dell.com) 1320c Color Laser Printer gives sharp, professional laser-quality output at up to 16 pages per minute and a monthly duty cycle capable of heavy print environments.

The printer has optional network capabilities, while Dell offers its automated

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With built-in 802.11n wireless and a Shock Sensor protected hard drive, Fujitsu's (www.fujitsu.com) LifeBook

A6110 is the perfect fit for a mobile professional, and includes a webcam, spill-resistant

keyboard and fingerprint-based biometric security. The machine comes with the Vista operating system on its 200GB hard drive, a 1.66GHz Intel dual-core processor, 2GB RAM (expandable up to 4GB) CD/DVD burner, a 15.4-inch wide-screen monitor with enhanced crystal technology and five USB 2.0 ports. Users can also opt for a Point and Write Touchpad for making quick notes or drawings.

Dell Vostro 1700: From \$729 + \$279 for Microsoft Office Small Business

Great for small accounting practices with simple network environments or no network, the Dell (www.dell.com)

Vostro 1700 Versatile Performance laptop computer includes a full 10-key on its keyboard and is ready to go right out of the box. The Vostro sports built-in Wi-Fi has a 17-inch wide-screen monitor and comes with the Vista operating system, CD/DVD burner, a 120GB hard drive and a 2GHz Intel Celeron processor that can be upgraded to a dual core 2.4GHz model. Other upgrade options include up to 4GB shared RAM, up to a 320GB hard drive, Bluetooth capabilities, and mobile broadband from AT&T, Sprint or Verizon.

BACKUP & DATA STORAGE

Maxtor

Shared Storage II: Starting at \$229 for 500GB; \$429 for 1TB

We are living in a terabyte world now (1TB = 1,000GB), and Maxtor (www.maxtor.com)

has made this high volume of data both portable and multi-user capable. The Shared Storage II backup drive makes it easy for all networked computers (both PC and Mac) in a smaller office to backup documents, data files, images and

even music and videos to a single location. Users can easily schedule backup

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offers portable hard drives in 80, 120 and 160 gigabyte sizes, all of which can fit in the palm of your hand or shirt pocket. The Ultra TravelDrive plugs into a PC or Mac using a simple USB or FireWire cable and can be used just like the old floppy drives of yore to drag and drop documents, pictures or any other files for portable storage that can be taken and plugged into another computer. The device can also be set to automatically backup an entire hard drive, or select portions of it, either on a schedule basis or with the push of one button. This is a great addition to a small, non-networked office looking to implement a basic backup routine, or for those individuals needing to transport large files between computers.

PDA's/PHONES

RIM

BlackBerry Curve 8310: \$199

Blackberry's (www.blackberry.com)

latest lineup of smartphones may not be able to cook you breakfast, but they do just about everything else a mobile professional needs their portable device to do: global roaming, personal information management, GPS, Bluetooth, BlackBerry

Maps, e-mail, web browsing, media player, SMS and MMS instant messaging, full QWERTY keyboards, games, camera, video recording, voicemail and, oh yeah, phone with "push-to-talk." Through the BlackBerry Trade Up program, professionals can replace their older device with a new model for a discounted price.

Palm/AT&T Palm Centro from AT&T: \$100

In an answer to the growing demand for crossover devices, AT&T Inc. and Palm Inc. (www.wireless.att.com)

have partnered to produce the Palm Centro. The new Centro is designed for the

expanding base of customers who want a better way to manage their busy lives

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Matias Portable Office Folding Keyboard: \$69.95

The new Portable Office line from Matias (www.matias.ca) includes a smart new foldable keyboard designed specifically for accounting and financial professionals who frequently travel. Weighing less than a pound, the keyboard sports a slim design and folds in half lengthwise to easily fit in a laptop bag, while maintaining a full-size keypad with additional FN key functions. The Folding Keyboard also provides an enhanced 10-key area that includes a Tab key for quick movement through forms and spreadsheets. Other Portable Office devices include the iFold portable laptop stand and cooling pad, and the iRizer, a mobile ergonomic laptop notebook. They have lots of other innovative keyboard and input devices, too, so be sure to look for the Matias folks at tradeshow like the California Accounting & Business Show & Conference in L.A. in June.

Logitech Cordless Number Pad for Notebooks/Laptops: \$39.99

Accountants love their 10-keys but, unfortunately, most laptops forego that part of the keyboard in order to save space. So what's a mobile professional to do? Logitech (www.logitech.com) has a solution. How about getting this functionality back by using a cordless pad that fits easily into a laptop case and requires no software installation. To top things off, the Cordless Number Pad also includes extra shortcut keys that help speed up spreadsheet tasks. Finding the right hardware can be challenging, but it is certainly worth spending a little extra time if it means finding products that can help you do your job better, not just serve as a tool. Working smarter, not harder is the goal, and the right technologies can help you achieve it.

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