to struggle with securely and effectively implementing emerging technologies, according to the results of its 2012 Top Technology Initiatives Survey.

Taija Sparkman • Mar. 15, 2012

The American Institute of CPAs found that many accounting professionals continue to struggle with securely and effectively implementing emerging technologies, according to the results of its 2012 Top Technology Initiatives Survey.

The top three priorities among those who took the survey were IT security, data management and retention and risk and compliance management. While many professionals are confident in their ability to manage confidential data internally on their servers, they are less comfortable with the external factors that compromise data when dealing with mobile devices says Janis Parthun, senior technical manager for the AICPA's Information Technology Division.

"The ability to tap critical information on the go, virtually whenever you want, is changing the way CPAs do business," said Anthony Pugliese, CPA, CGMA, CITP, the AICPA's senior vice president of finance, operations and member value. "But it imposes new burdens, too. CPAs and the clients and companies they work for need to stay on top of technological shifts, make the right decisions on access, security and privacy, and map out new areas of growth. It's clear we're still working our way through these challenges."

"Essentially, professionals need more resources and education on how to better manage mobile data against the associated risks. If they had more resources to support these technologies, they would feel more confident in them," says Parthun, who helped conduct the survey, along with Donny Shimamoto, CPA.CITP, chair of the AICPA's Information Technology Executive Committee and founder of IntrapriseTechKnowlogies LLC.

are:

1. Securing the IT environment (62 percent)*
2. Managing and retaining data (61 percent)
3. Managing risk and compliance (65 percent)
4. Ensuring privacy (62 percent)
5. Leveraging emerging technologies (34 percent)
6. Managing system implementation (52 percent)
7. Enabling decision support and managing performance (46 percent)
8. Governing and managing IT investment/spending (56 percent)
9. Preventing and responding to fraud (60 percent)
0. Managing vendors and service providers (56 percent)

The figure in parentheses is percentage of respondents who felt either confident or highly confident their client or organization is handling the task appropriately.

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