have a digital pile of client returns that are "in progress," and will likely remain that way for weeks or months. Not because the firm hasn't gotten to them yet, but probably because they are still waiting on clients to send them additional documents.

Isaac M. O'Bannon • Feb. 12, 2014

It's the just the beginning of tax season, but most tax professionals likely already have a digital pile of client returns that are "in progress," and many of those returns may remain that way for weeks or months. Not because the firm hasn't gotten to

them yet, but probably because they are still waiting on clients to send them

The system was designed by a group of CPAs who've felt the real-life pains of trying to gather client documents (and frequently reminding clients to send them in). CEO Ryan Watson says they were inspired to create the system for use by their own outsourced CFO, advisory and tax firm, Upsourced Accounting, because it was becoming too time-consuming.

"At its core, Sqrl is a request engine, a tool that drastically reduces the time spent by professionals trying to request documents and information from clients," Watson said. "It seemed we were spending as much as 25 percent of our time each week on simple communications with clients. Sqrl puts this process on auto pilot."

After seeing how much time their system saved them in their own practice, Watson and co-founders Ryan Baker and Craig Baldwin, decided to make it available to other tax and accounting pros. So they took the system, originally called Accrew, to Cincinnati business accelerator Brandery.

After going through the start-up program, the new company received $550,000 in venture capital seed funding from CincyTech, Hyde Park Ventures and Vine Street Ventures.

What's with the Name?

No, it isn't a new version of a SQL database. After receiving expert business, development and marketing advice, the system was renamed Sqrl. If you don't get it yet, think about what squirrels do: Spend all day hunting and gathering acorns and other nuts and seeds. That's what Sqrl does, too... well, replace the nuts with client tax and financial documents.

In addition to automating the process of getting tax documents, the system can also be used for client on-boarding, audit document gathering and ongoing bookkeeping

functions.

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