CPA
Practice **Advisor**

Advisor celebrates 20 years serving tax and accounting professionals. Here's a look back at where we were and how we've grown alongside the technology changes in the profession over the past two decades.

Isaac M. O'Bannon • Sep. 05, 2014

What were you doing 20 years ago? Personally, I was a 21 year-old in the Navy, serving as a construction equipment operator (Navy SeaBee). I was about as far away from the tax and accounting community as possible, although since I was fortunate

enough to have access to GPS back then, I guess I was already advancing into the

At the time, only about a year after the introduction of Microsoft's Windows 3.0 and with the continued dominance of the DOS platform, the PC was quickly finding a home on the desktops of tax professionals. As a result, many companies that had thrived as service bureaus during the previous decade turned toward developing software for use by practitioners.

It was a natural evolution, as many of these companies had already developed the programs they used to process returns for firms. It was now a matter of making the programs work on a PC and making them easy enough to use for the masses of new computer users. Soon, programs from CCH, CompuTax, Creative Solutions, TaxSlayer and others were on the market, to be followed quickly by tax research libraries on CD-ROMs instead of hundreds of books.

Outside of the professional space, consumers and business owners were also joining in the computer revolution, which would, in turn, further drive professionals toward adopting technology that could work with data from the programs their customers were using.

The Internet Age Begins (1994-1999)

This seemingly never-ending cycle of development would really gain traction in 1994, when the internet became the newest driving force for innovation, soon changing the way the profession and our society does virtually everything. By 1998, *The CPA Software News* had started posting select articles, columns and parts of its software reviews on its website.

By 2000, the publication had expanded its circulation to more than 50,000 tax and accounting professionals in all 50 states, and had partnered with the AICPA and the National Society of Accountants to provide the publication as a benefit to sections of their membership. *The CPA Software News* had grown to a 10-person staff, with the

founder still serving as publisher, a lead managing editor, editor, in-house art

Professional Direction (2004-2010)

In 2004, Dodgen turned to Gregory L. LaFollette, CPA.CITP, a seasoned professional and technology expert who had been in private practice for more than 20 years and had also been an executive with a large technology vendor. This gave him an exceptional background to lead the publication as its Executive Editor. Greg, who is now Director of Product Strategy for CPA2Biz, led the publication through its rebranding as *The CPA Technology Advisor*. Additionally, his presence as a speaker at more than 50 tradeshows, conferences and other events each year, positioned him as one of the profession's most notable and recognizable voices.

What Greg had in mind was much more than a simple name change, however. Through his vision and tech savvy, he helped reshape *The CPA Technology Advisor*'s digital offerings, adding mobile technology resources, social media interaction and the first regular webcasts and podcasts specifically designed for tax and accounting professionals. Since they debuted, our webcasts have provided more than 100,000 hours of free CPE credit to accountants.

In 2009, Darren Root, CPA.CITP, took over the Executive Editor helm. The managing partner of a public practice in Bloomington, Indiana, Darren is also widely respected for his RootWorks consultancy, which helps other small and mid-sized practices develop and implement workflow strategies and technologies.

Continuing The Evolution (2011-)

Under Darren's editorial leadership as well the direction of new publisher, Jim Baker, the publication and its online tools and resources continue to evolve, reflecting the changing needs of the profession, as well as the changes that technology has had upon how professionals do their work in the modern firm. This sharpened focus on

helping practices with their own productivity and efficiency is reflected in the

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