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Whether you use an iPhone or not, you cannot escape the impact it is having on the

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he had had in 20 years. Since then, I have heard countless times how being able to do payroll, manage the books (AP and AR), etc. from any place with a web connection has given the accountant more control and flexibility than ever before.

SaaS is a huge win because the data and the application are stored centrally on the web. Practitioners don't have to worry about changes to the data file or if they're on the right version of the software. This central repository is perfect for accountants that work with clients remotely or employees in multiple locations. Syncing data files is time consuming, error prone and costly. And the cost and hassle of maintaining multiple versions of the software to accommodate remote users is impossible. SaaS eliminates the need for syncing data or applications. How much time and money do *you* spend on backups and redundancy? Probably not a lot.

More importantly, most SaaS applications have more security controls than a bank, let alone the typical tax and accounting firm. Does the thought of unlocked drawers with easily accessible check stock ring a bell? I have seen this situation in many accounting firms. It may be easier for the firm to not lock things up, but it is opening up the firm (and its clients) to theft. In fact, security is one of the most common reasons I hear as to why accountants are not doing more bookkeeping for their clients. They don't want the risk of confidential information — checks or documents — in their office. SaaS can solve all of this, along with the ability to allow access to only those that need it as well as the option to lock out employees with the click of a mouse.

If these reasons for switching your business to SaaS tools weren't enough, think about the marriage of SaaS and mobile. While SaaS is great, it alone does not give accountants the complete flexibility they need to work from anywhere. This is where mobile plays a huge part in your operations today and in the future. Being able to access your office from your phone will change how you work, if it hasn't already.

Today, you can already find applications that let you manage the books, do AP, find

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storage, security and audit trail that SaaS applications provide are minimum requirements for accountants to use applications from any location. Without SaaS, data is synced to the phone and is hard to keep up to date. Without SaaS, phones would have confidential information, including documents and bank accounts, for any thief to access (for those of you worried about this make sure you set up your phone so that you can reset/wipe it from any other location using MobileMe). Because of SaaS, tax and accounting professionals can go mobile easily and securely.

Killer apps are out there ... so find them. Ask your peers what they're using. *CPA Practice Advisor* will continue to make you aware of apps you might want to consider. (See a list of apps Randy Johnston recommends at www.CPAPracticeAdvisor.com/go/3257. Isaac O'Bannon mentions a few on page XX of this issue or at www.CPAPracticeAdvisor.com/go/XXXX, and Greg LaFollette will be regularly sharing about apps and their practical application in tax and accounting firms with his regular column, "Putting the *i* in Practice"). You won't be doing your clients' taxes on a phone, but you can do client payroll, time tracking, bookkeeping, pay bills, and email to name a few. You'll be more efficient, collaborative and in control from anywhere.

I find it funny that the letter *I*, which represents "self," is now the catalyst for collaboration and teamwork over the Internet, freeing people to do what want to do most — live.

Rhonda – If space allows on this page, please use the QR code that RD sent you for our FB page along with this note on this page:

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