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informed. Others are trying to position, parody and learn. You've seen this column...

Randy Johnston • Feb. 13, 2018



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Many of you have followed this column for years, and that loyalty is certainly appreciated. Choosing a monthly topic of interest, innovation and opportunity related to accounting and technology that you may not have considered can be a

challenge. We may be entering a time of great opportunity that will certainly be a

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why and how of technologies, mainly focusing on the emerging technologies that are far enough along that they work and provide a business opportunity.

Year of the Bird and Canaries

Many of you like to read, as do I, and in the January edition of National Geographic magazine, they declared 2018 “[The Year of the Bird](#),” marking the 100th anniversary of the [Migratory Bird Treaty Act](#). I had forgotten a quote from Thomas Lovejoy, a Biologist and Godfather of Biodiversity: “If you take care of birds, you take care of most of the environmental problems in the world.” Many of us do recall the concept and use of canaries in coal mines to detect carbon monoxide and other toxic gases before they hurt humans. This practice was continued from 1911 until December 30, 1986 according to Kat Eschner in a Smithsonian article entitled “[The Story of the Real Canary in the Coal Mine](#)” from December 30, 2016.

We continue our shift from large mainframe to personal computer to network to mobile computer to cloud computing, adding more capabilities with each new technology. We don't tend to retire too many technologies. Some do finally disappear, such as mimeograph, when it is clear they are no longer cheaper, faster or better than any other method. When was the last time you received or sent a fax? Is there a need for fax? Do you still send or receive faxes? The technology is not quite defunct, but you can see it is close. Consider 8”, 5.25” or 3.5” floppies. Do you still use any of these? The technology canaries are beginning to tell me that things that are familiar to us are getting ready to disappear.

So, What's the Format and Goal?

Although my columns won't always be of the same format, for the foreseeable future, my intent is to present each technology explaining the why and the how. Further, if a current technology is threatened or could be supplanted or replaced with a new

technology, I'll provide that warning, too. The goal is to make you aware of the

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seen a time when so many technologies are presenting so many opportunities to so few people. I want you to be included. Although a typical column will have more detail, note the abbreviated example below of recently introduced archival, thermal, color printing.

Key Information	Technology: Inkless printing
Why is the new technology better?	Convenient, Conveys more information, Ability to have a printed image almost immediately
How can you do this today?	Memobird , Polaroid , HP Sprocket , Zink
Risks	High costs, small size format
Where/When to use	Work with clients to have photographs produced on demand
How Much?	Typically, less than \$500 for the device, and \$0.50 per photo
Displaced technology or service	Photo printing service
Other resources	Tech Advisor

Now, picture the topic changing from Inkless printing to: Blockchain, Machine Learning, Artificial Intelligence, Cryptocurrency, Robotic accounting, Big Data and other technologies directly affecting the practice of accounting. This strategy won't

leave out other important technologies when they are ready for consideration

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of technology. It is time to look for new sandboxes to play in, complexity needs to be reduced and that less may be more. Stay tuned.

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