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ACCOUNTING & AUDIT

2022 Innovation Awards Spotlight Top Tech for Tax and Accounting Pros

The Innovation Awards were first presented in 2004, and honor new or recently enhanced technologies that benefit tax and accounting professionals and their clients ...

Isaac M. O'Bannon • Aug. 03, 2022



CPA Practice
Advisor
TAX & ACCOUNTING
TECHNOLOGY
INNOVATION
AWARD | **2022**

Automation, artificial intelligence, and connective technologies are becoming increasingly important to the productivity and profitability of modern tax and

accounting firms, helping to streamline workflows and keep tasking as efficient as possible.

The winners of this year's **Tax & Accounting Technology Innovation Awards**, now in their 19th year, were selected by a panel of thought leaders in the profession. Presented by *CPA Practice Advisor*, the Innovation Awards were first presented in 2004, and honor new or recently enhanced technologies that benefit tax and accounting professionals and their clients through improved workflow and efficiencies, increased accessibility, enhanced collaboration, greater accuracy, or other means. Nominated products or technologies must be less than 2 years old or have had new, significant features or enhancements during that time.

"These awards recognize new technologies that can benefit tax and accounting professionals, and their clients" said *CPA Practice Advisor* Editor-in-Chief Gail Perry, CPA. "As the profession continues to embrace new workflows and processes that optimize the potentials of these technologies, firms are improving their efficiency and focusing their practices on more profitable service offerings that, at the same time, are more beneficial to the individuals and businesses that rely on them for advice and strategy." Perry also manages a tax practice and is the author of more than 30 books, including *Mint.com for Dummies*, *Surviving Financial Downsizing*, and *Idiot's Guide to Introductory Accounting*.

The winners of the *CPA Practice Advisor* Tax and Accounting Technology Innovation Awards are selected from nominated products by our awards committee, which includes thought leaders and professionals engaged in various practice specialties across the accounting profession.

CPA Practice Advisor provides a variety of independent digital and print resources for accounting professionals, including practice resources, podcast reviews of practice technologies, interactive tools, and content that helps firms achieve greater productivity. Award winners are listed in alphabetical order.

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2022 Innovation Award Winners

[Avalara Returns for Accountants – by Avalara](#)

The landmark 2018 S. Dakota v. Wayfair Supreme Court ruling continues to unleash complexity for businesses of all sizes four years on, and accountants are more than ever on the front lines in helping clients to understand and stay in compliance with increasing sales tax regulations. In tandem, accounting firms continue to struggle to shift meaningfully into advisory services, while also spending client time on compliance.

Avalara Returns for Accountants, a recent addition to the Avalara for Accountants product suite, was designed for accounting practitioners to help scale compliance by automating sales tax returns preparation and filing processes. This in-firm solution leverages proven Avalara cloud technology to simplify and streamline a firm's tax compliance practice, with benefits including:

- Business scalability and firm growth
- Increased efficiency
- Reduced firm and client risk
- Improved client satisfaction

With the push for digitization, proliferating economic nexus laws and other regulatory changes, accounting professionals are looking for new efficiencies and services to meet the urgent needs of clients. Avalara Returns for Accountants delivers visibility into process status, manages multiple clients more efficiently, and automates filing based on the needs of professional service providers. Accounting firms get flexible cloud technology to scale and grow their practice, meet complex compliance needs of clients, and focus more on advisory work.

Fieldguide Platform

Fieldguide is a platform for modern assurance and advisory firms that streamlines the end-to-end engagement workflow. Since launching in 2021, Fieldguide has released two dozen frameworks across cybersecurity and ESG risk (e.g., SOC2, NIST CSF, ISO 27001, SASB, and more), and has become a favorite among the nation's best audit firms.

- **Automation:** Fieldguide doubles productivity and eliminates errors by automating every step of the engagement, from client requests to sampling and testing, to templated reporting.
- **Collaboration:** Fieldguide brings together the entire engagement across practitioners and clients on a cloud-native platform. Practitioners can act on insights, drive automation, and communicate with clients.

- **Sales-maximizing client experiences:** Firms gain a competitive advantage by offering a tech-enabled experience that modern clients expect. Clients are empowered with an easy-to-use central hub to upload files, complete tasks, fill-out questionnaires, share comments, and view real-time status updates. Firms are marketing the use of Fieldguide in their sales process.

With Fieldguide, CPA firms, such as CLA, Wipfli, Withum, Warren Averett, BerryDunn, have saved countless hours of manual work and doubled their capacities. Fieldguide has enabled Firms to focus on delivering exceptional client service and strategic advice. Fieldguide's NPS score is consistently a world-class 90+.

“We were originally sending four people onsite for one job, but we now have two people working remotely on one job... our team is now doing three to four audits a week with the new team structure. Historically it might've been one engagement, two at the most,” said Christopher Ellingwood, senior manager at BerryDunn. Read the case study at: <https://bit.ly/3sQsWP4>.

Inflo Workpapers

Inflo Workpapers is a comprehensive, cloud-native audit engagement workflow solution. It delivers an innovative audit methodology and end-to-end workflow in which advanced technologies are integrated at the point they are needed within a digital audit workflow and digital client experience. Until now, forward-thinking firms attempting to incorporate progressive technologies have been forced to piece together disparate solutions, layering new technologies on top of traditional audit platforms and methodologies. By tightly integrating collaboration and data analytics capabilities, Inflo Workpapers advances the profession by making the adoption of emerging technologies practical, seamless, and efficient.

Covering the entire audit process, ensuring compliance with professional standards, and delivering the right technologies exactly where it's needed in the engagement:

- **Risk Assessment.** Auditors work directly with the data – drilling down to efficiently identify unusual items and craft well-informed questions, freeing them to spend time thinking critically.
- **Response to Risk.** Powerful visuals and hybrid intelligence ensure high quality and efficient audit responses.
- **Substantive Testing Procedures.** Traditional testing is replaced with superior techniques, including highly efficient whole-population testing.

- **Reporting.** Value-add reporting ensures both standards compliance and greater client value.

Inflo Workpapers transforms the audit experience for the next generation of accountants entering our profession. Such is the value of an audit performed using Inflo, organizations are actively seeking CPA firms using this more efficient and insightful audit platform. This has resulted in several large client wins for customer firms, directly due to referrals from Inflo, or from the demonstration of Inflo during the audit bid process.

SafeSend Returns

The new SafeSend Returns Group Returns & Signer Delegation features allow firms to send multiple returns to a designated recipient such as a controller, CFO, or assistant. The designee uses one link to access and manage returns. With these SafeSend Returns features, firms can:

- Send multiple returns (all return types) to one individual.
- Give one individual the ability to review, sign, and make payments for multiple returns in the same seamless flow.
- Give one individual the ability to control the review of the return and make payments while delegating the signing step to the appropriate person for completion.
- Send all reminders to one individual, who will be responsible for the tasks.
- Track the status of delivered returns for the group or “family” through in-product reporting.

Valid8 Audit and Investigations

Valid8 streamlines the collection of accounting evidence to improve efficiency and reduce risk in audit, forensic, advisory or tax engagements. Valid8 software extracts accounting evidence from documents and systems to help eliminate or reduce sample risk from professional accounting engagements.

Used in thousands of professional accounting engagements in the United States, United Kingdom and Canada, Valid8 allows customers to achieve higher quality output while automating and accelerating the low level, mundane work of data preparation. Types of engagements include: Financial statement audits, forensic accounting, federal and state white collar crime investigations, Chapter 11

bankruptcies, corporate restructuring, high net-worth divorces, buy side M&A diligence.

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2022 Innovation Award Finalists

Corvee Tax Planning

Corvee Tax Planning software is a first-of-its-kind software that allows accounting and tax professionals to scan their clients' tax returns, collect vital information via custom individual and business questionnaires, analyze estimated tax savings across multiple entities and multiple years, and prepare tax plan proposals and plans for their clients – all within a matter of minutes. Originally launched in October of 2020, Corvee Tax Planning software allows tax professionals to save their clients' money in a way that allows them to be the trusted advisor their clients are looking for.

In addition, in March of this year, the company launched state and local tax planning allowing firms to analyze client tax scenarios quickly and easily at the federal and state level for additional tax savings and state-specific tax planning strategies, all within Corvee tax planning software.

Corvee tax planning software now includes 1,600+ strategies that allow firms to save their clients' money on taxes. Additionally, with Corvee's team of tax experts, the company is on the path to provide over 20,000+ tax savings strategies in the coming years. Corvee tax planning software now offers:

- Support for federal forms to calculate federal tax owed
- Support for all 50 state and local forms to calculate tax owed
- Support for 1,600+ state tax planning strategies
- Jurisdiction summaries for all 50 states with key dates and deadlines
- Tax plan deliverable templates to show clients the value of your state and local planning
- More affordable licenses for additional users (72% reduction in per user pricing)

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FreshBooks

According to 95% of small business owners, FreshBooks is more seamless to use than other platforms. Designed for accountants, small businesses, freelancers,

entrepreneurs, and businesses with contractors, FreshBooks' software makes accounting, billing, invoices, and expenses easy and simple, saving people over 192 hours annually. When it's easy for clients to manage their books, it makes the professionals' work stream more efficient, whether they are being supported 365 days a year or during tax season.

FreshBooks gives insight to know where an accountant stands with their clients, business, and finances. FreshBooks Double-Entry Accounting identifies revenue items and their related expenses, giving accounting professionals a calculation of profits and losses. Professionals can track time in FreshBooks and see exactly how much time they're spending on clients and projects and generate an invoice with just one click. In fact, New Zealand Web designer Ahmed Omer saves 6 billable hours every week through FreshBooks. Clients are able to pay online, which means the professional gets paid twice as fast, improving cash flow and minimizing headaches. Customers pay directly through invoices and automatically record each payment in your account.

Automatic checks and balances ensure debit and credit amounts are equal, which reduces the chance of errors year-round and when filing taxes. FreshBooks also makes it easy for clients to complete part of the workflow, meaning the professional is able to take on a more advisory role and develop deeper client relationships. Communication and transparency is key for client trust and engagement

HubSync Tax Platform

Nearly everything in today's world is easier today, from cashing checks, ordering food, online trading and even dating! One necessity that isn't easy, the outdated tax preparation process! There are many point solutions, yet there is not a solution for the tax professional. HubSync's fully digital end-to-end platform solves this problem and is digitizing and automating the whole process.

Seasoned tax professionals built HubSync so they first solved the biggest pain points for tax professionals. They've accomplished this by building nine separate modules so firms can start slow and build up the whole suite of platforms seamlessly. No other platform brings all of these pieces together. HubSync provides:

- Engagement Letter Automation- Simplify & automate the tax prep process from start to finish
- Client Master Data- Shared Client data is the uniform set of identifiers and extended attributes that describes the core entities of the enterprise including customers, prospects, citizens, suppliers, sites, hierarchies, chart of accounts.
- Tax Organizer– Smooth, digital client experience for clients to upload documents directly into HubSync
- Workpapers– Tax return workpapers that provides a standardized process, training and harmonization of data
- Tax Return Tracking– Real-time tax return status updates with drill down reporting
- eSign– IRS 8879 automatically sent to clients for e-signature and track in real-time
- eFile Automation- Direct pull from tax return prep software to track all electronic filings in one location allowing practitioners to set up reports to see their clients quickly
- Tax Return Delivery- Automatically process client deliverables and seamlessly send electronically
- Planning & Analytics– Analyze your firm’s operations in real-time

RUN – Powered by ADP

RUN Powered by ADP is a cloud-based, online tool that simplifies processing payroll and streamlines human resources tasks. In response to small business demand, many accountants are adding services, such as payroll and HR, to help them grow their business and offset projected revenue declines across the accounting services industry (Source: IBISWorld, “Accounting Services in the US,” October 2020). In addition, through its own customer research on HR and payroll tools, ADP learned small business owners wanted to:

- Stress less about errors and compliance
- Have more time to focus on their businesses, rather than on administrative tasks.

ADP listened and re-imagined the existing RUN Powered by ADP offering in September of 2021. While maintaining the key functions that users love – ADP introduced the following features to the all-new RUN:

- Personalized dashboard – See what you need in one view tailored to you, including your next payroll, priority to-dos, and payroll history.

- **Intelligent search** – A smart search tool with autosuggestions instantly connects you to popular resources, favorite reports, frequent tasks and more.
 - **Step-by-step guidance** – Relevant tips and help for payroll and HR tasks are served up along the way.
 - **A.I. powered error detection** – RUN learns your payroll and reviews your data, flagging potential errors before they happen.
 - **Payroll tax alerts** – Get alerts from state and local tax jurisdictions directly in RUN, along with instructions on what to do about them.
 - **Easy employee onboarding** – Allow new employees to directly and securely enter their personal information.
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Workflow by Canopy

Much of an accountant's work includes information passed to and collected from clients. Lost or misplaced documents can cause serious issues. Canopy's Document Management module allows accounting professionals to easily upload, store, organize, locate, collaborate on, and manage documents. Users can also organize, edit, annotate, send, and create uniform folder structures across all clients, ensuring only authorized people have access to certain documents and collect eSignatures. Since October 2020, Canopy has added features, including:

- **Annotations:** Customers can annotate documents directly within Canopy, eliminating downloads and multiple document variations. Annotations are saved as a separate layer, making it possible for notes to be seen internally, but not viewable by accountant's clients.
- **File editing:** Desktop Assistant helps easily and directly upload files (in bulk and without needing to compress them) into Canopy also via print and scan functionality. Smart matching saves time by matching folders uploaded to contacts already in Canopy.
- **Roles/permissions:** After creating a team, users can be grouped so permissions can be managed to control who can and cannot view and interact with specific folders. Besides helping customers establish ethical walls, this also saves them time in managing permissions for new, existing, seasonal, and former employees.
- **Reorder/rotate/edit/delete:** Customers can reorder, rotate, edit, or delete pages without having to leave Canopy producing professional, quality documents.
- **Virtual drive:** Accountants can instantly sync files between their computer and Canopy from this new desktop drive. Folder structures match between the two and

any changes are synced in both areas.

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Honorable mention goes to these other 2022 Innovation Award Nominees:

- [Anchor](#)
- [Atlassian](#)
- [Audit Dashboard](#)
- [AuditFile](#)
- [AvidXchange](#)
- [Beech Valley](#)
- [BlackLine](#)
- [Bloomberg Tax](#)
- [Bookkeep](#)
- [Clarity](#)
- [Client Hub](#)
- [ConvergenceCoaching, LLC](#)
- [Digits](#)
- [Earmark CPE](#)
- [Expensify](#)
- [Finagraph](#)
- [Intuit](#)
- [Karbon](#)
- [LeaseCrunch](#)
- [Meyer Tax Consulting](#)
- [My-CPE](#)
- [Paychex](#)
- [Repositax, Inc.](#)
- [Sales Tax Institute](#)
- [Sovos 1099 Pro](#)
- [Suralink](#)
- [Thomson Reuters](#)
- [TPS Software Inc.](#)

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CPA Practice Advisor's digital and print publications offer independent practice management resources and technology information for tax and accounting

professionals in public practice. www.CPAPracticeAdvisor.com. The nomination period for the 2023 Innovation Awards will open in February 2023.

[Avalara](#) • [fieldguide](#) • [Inflow Workpapers](#) • [SafeSend](#) • [Valid8](#) • [Accounting & Audit](#) • [Advisory](#) • [Awards](#) • [Article](#)

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