

The Rise of GenAI:

Exploring its rapid emergence and transformative impact on accounting and finance



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Introduction

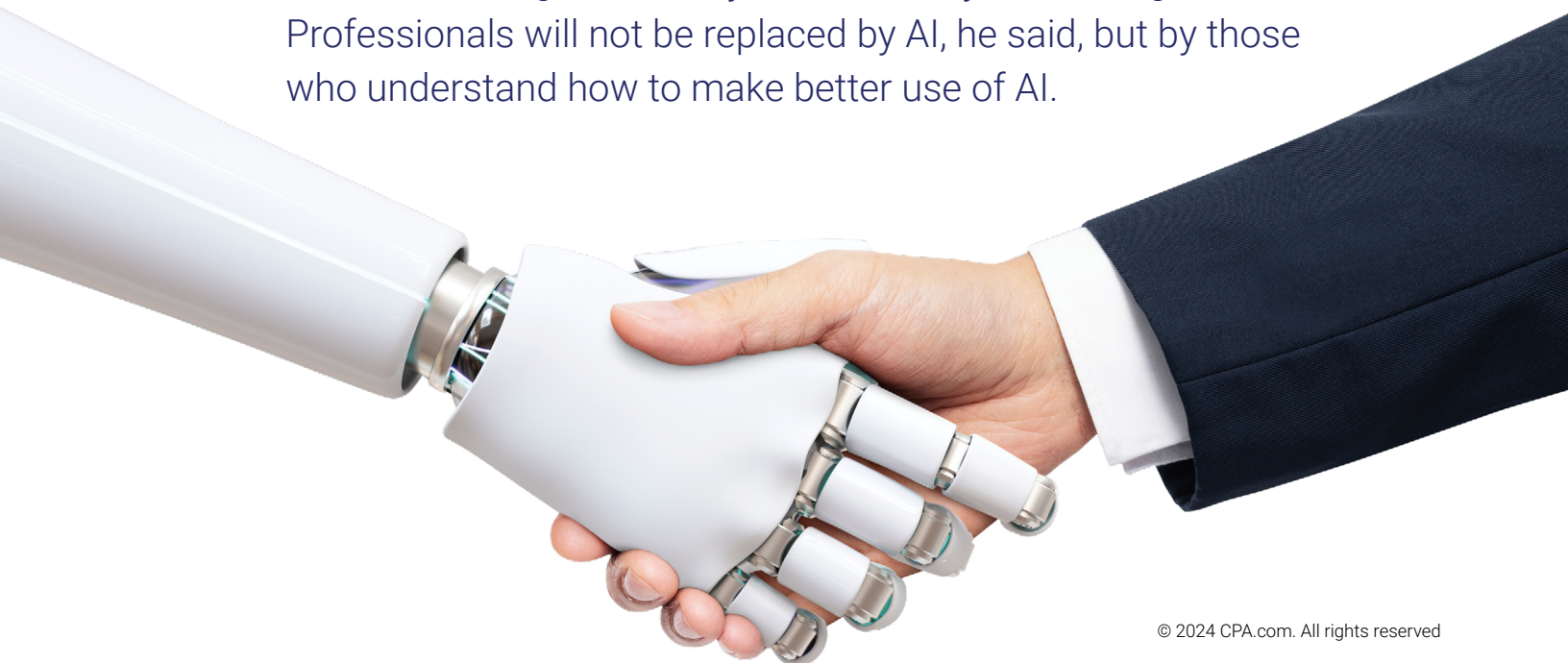
What a difference a year makes. Generative AI (GenAI) has taken center stage in the global business ecosystem since OpenAI first introduced ChatGPT to the public in late 2022. ChatGPT experienced the fastest adoption of any technology in history as businesses raced to understand and harness the opportunities it offers.

“GenAI has the potential to revolutionize the way firms deliver value and business insights, while also increasing their capacity to do so,” said Erik Asgeirsson, CPA.com president and CEO. “It will deepen the trusted advisor relationship and unlock new opportunities for growth.” While accountants have long used AI to automate areas such as financial planning and analysis, GenAI—whose capabilities are still being explored and developed—can fundamentally transform processes and significantly broaden the reach of businesses and individuals. It makes it possible to move beyond simple task automation to autonomous workflow with human oversight.

But with any emerging technology, and specifically one with the transformative potential of GenAI, there are several considerations when it comes to its safe and secure implementation. This has led to an array of legislative and regulatory efforts at the state, federal and international levels to ensure responsible AI usage. As a profession built on protecting the public interest, we are taking a leadership role in educating on these efforts while also considering the opportunities it presents to deepen practitioners’ position as trusted advisors.

The report is part of CPA.com’s [multi-part initiative](#) to demystify GenAI for the accounting profession. It includes insights and information gathered from key stakeholders in the AI ecosystem, including interviews, events and discussions held throughout the past year, and the inaugural [AICPA and CPA.com AI Symposium](#) held in Jan. 2024 and as well as CPA.com’s [2023 Digital CPA \(DCPA\) Conference](#).

“There is a huge opportunity in front of us,” said Aaron Harris, Global CTO, Sage. “The way we’ll win is by embracing it.” Professionals will not be replaced by AI, he said, but by those who understand how to make better use of AI.



GenAI: What it can and can't do



It's important to keep these benefits and limitations in mind while evaluating with GenAI, according to Pascal Finette, a innovation expert and co-founder of be radical who delivered a keynote session at the DCPA Conference. Here are a few examples of what you need to know.

- **It is not a search engine.** It can change what users expect from search engines, but it's not very good at specific information retrieval because it's an autocomplete tool.
- **Its answers seem convincing, but they're not necessarily accurate.** If the model's training doesn't include the information it needs to answer a question, it may hallucinate a false response. Its responses may also be subject to bias embedded in its training. Asking the model to explain how it got an answer can provide some transparency.
- **It's bad at math.** It focuses on whether something is more or less likely rather than whether it's right or wrong.
- **Privacy should be a major concern.** There is a high risk of exposing personally identifiable information or confidential client or firm information in public GenAI programs.
- **AI can create quality art, photos and videos—it can also create fakes.** While GenAI can generate a voice singing an original song, it can also as easily clone a specific individual's voice and put words into their mouth. This can cause serious reputational or other risks.

- **It can perform as a junior data programmer and/or analyst.** ChatGPT Code Interpreter can take data from a comma-separated values or Excel file, write Python code to answer questions about what the information shows or means, and then offer suggestions on how to respond.
- **It can analyze images.** GPT-4V can perform tasks such as providing the calorie count based on a picture of food and tabulate the information in a file.
- **It can simplify website development.** Any user can develop a website.
- **It can talk back.** The free version of ChatGPT has a "voice" feature that allows you to have an actual back-and-forth conversation.
- **It can be customized to perform specific tasks.** Finette pointed to ROBO CFO, which creates bots for specific use cases, including ones managed by auditors or controllers, that can offer tips on work performed.

Given the dramatic pace of adoption, accounting firms and company finance teams should be prepared to welcome and experiment with the technology. It will allow small firms to compete with big ones, "not only because of the ease of use, but because it's the early adopters that win, not the ones with the most resources," said Jeff Seibert, co-founder and CEO of Digits, which recently launched Digits Connect, an open API platform for accounting data. He believes firms should not be reluctant to introduce new tools to clients. "They're hungry," he said. "They've seen what it can do, and they want it for themselves."

How finance professionals are embracing AI

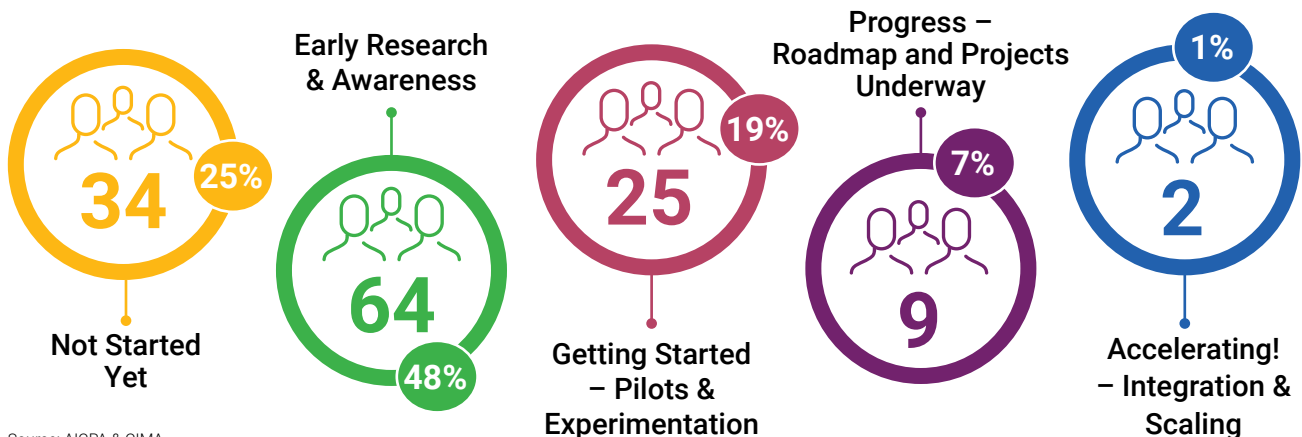
The ability to optimize the value of GenAI systems and manage their risks are quickly becoming required competencies in finance, according to Tom Hood, CPA/CITP, CGMA, AICPA & CIMA’s executive vice president–Business Engagement and Growth. In working with GenAI, “finance teams should start small and ramp up strategically, with a strong focus on data security and intellectual property protections throughout the process.”

A majority of finance leaders continue to be at least moderately concerned about privacy, ethical or accuracy risks related to the rapidly growing use of public GenAI programs, but more than a quarter are experimenting with the technology in business applications, according to a recent AICPA & CIMA Economic Outlook Survey. When members of the AICPA Future of Finance Leadership Advisory Group (FFLAG) hosted a GenAI panel at a finance executives summit, an audience poll found that about one-half were already involved in early research when it comes to AI and GenAI, while more than a quarter were anywhere from the experimentation to the acceleration stage (see chart). It’s no surprise, then, that harnessing GenAI and AI was among the top five most important issues identified by 150 senior finance executives at a recent Future of Finance Summit.

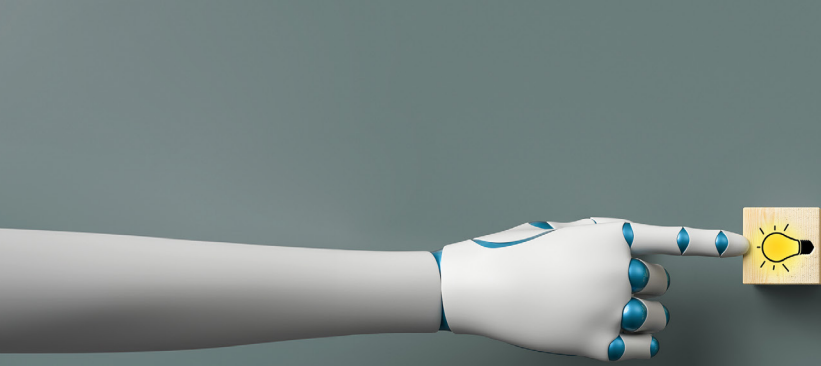
Effective GenAI use in finance begins with imagining and acting on its broad potential. With those goals in mind, FFLAG members developed a ranked list of GenAI use cases they were considering or already employing in their own organizations.

1. Performing content synthesis and summarization.
2. Leveraging GenAI to summarize earnings transcripts and Q&A sessions.
3. Forecasting sales outcomes, especially for businesses with significant run rates, such as \$100 billion.
4. Document and email Review, crafting job descriptions, and general document troubleshooting.
5. Reviewing contracts, gathering supplemental material data, and creating statements of work for service organizations.
6. Researching trends and summarizing multiple reports to identify major themes.
7. Drafting and reviewing accounting policies and memos.
8. Crafting policies and procedures, and facilitating document review.
9. Identifying opportunities to speed up budget reallocation decisions based on purchase order data and historical spending trends.

Where are you on your AI...Gen AI Journey?



Source: AICPA & CIMA



CPA.com is accelerating change

The AICPA and CPA.com [Startup Accelerator](#) supports the growth of early-stage technology companies that benefit the accounting and finance ecosystem so that innovators and cutting-edge solutions can help transform the profession. The goal is to provide individual accountants and finance teams with the tools they need to be the go-to analysts, strategists and consultants who are indispensable to organizations across the globe.

The 2024 participants include seven early-stage companies leveraging AI to create efficiencies and enhance value in services across audit, accounting, tax advisory and firm management:

- **Aider** delivers compliance efficiencies, while enabling AI-powered advisory at scale for firms.
- **Black Ore** offers CPAs an AI-powered tax preparation platform designed to automate complex tax returns quickly and accurately, which can reduce burnout and give CPAs more time to focus on client advisory and growing their firms.
- **TimeCredit** provides AI-powered research and documentation tools for accountants to automate technical memo writing and answer complex questions instantly.
- **Laurel** utilizes advanced AI to automate timekeeping and address billing complexities for accounting firms, saving timekeepers valuable time and offering unparalleled insights into their operations.

- **Digilence** offers AI, machine learning, automation and intelligent document processing capabilities to accounting firms through its Digilence Cloud, using a SaaS model.
- **Supervisor**, an advanced audit analytics software, automates financial anomaly detection for continuous error and fraud detection.
- **Materia** provides an AI-powered intelligent workflow automation platform for public accounting firms that helps improve the efficiency and quality of audits.

“When we created the GenAI Toolkit, one of our goals was to empower practitioners to lean-in and understand how to use low-cost/no-cost LLMs,” said Kacey Johnson, vice president of Strategy and Innovation at CPA.com. “In reality, most firms will benefit from the power of AI through software and applications that they deploy for other business purposes. Those solutions will have AI capabilities regardless of whether the user sought to deploy the new emerging tech,” said Johnson. “When we announced an AI-focused cohort for our 2024 Startup Accelerator, we saw a 210% increase in applications. We’ll soon get to a point with new solution development where new software won’t be developed without AI. It’ll be similar to how software today isn’t built for localized servers—all systems are native to the cloud. The same will happen with software development and AI—it will become table stakes.”

Accounting opportunities in the age of GenAI

The accounting profession has already successfully adopted AI for a variety of purposes, but GenAI is a technology of a different magnitude, noted Aaron Harris, Global CTO, Sage, who presented at the AICPA and CPA.com AI Symposium. It is as groundbreaking as the internet or the smartphone, but with a much faster adoption rate and greater ease of use. As a result, it's driving a much greater impact and has the potential to create new industries, spur long-term economic transformation, and accelerate further innovation.

AI makes it possible to create new and better business models and more precisely match value to cost. It's dramatically increasing worker productivity, especially for knowledge workers, cutting down on administrative work. AI can help minimize the impact of the staffing shortage in the accounting profession and beyond by taking on routine, manual work and allowing people to transition to higher-value activities. It will also diversify the skills needed by the industry and broaden its appeal. And because it's readily accessible, GenAI enables a broader range of employees to gain the information they need for decision-making. "The way we drive efficiency now is through low-cost labor and automation of specific tasks," said Harris. "The future is about replacing both of those with autonomous agents."

GenAI can understand human language and break instructions into smaller tasks. It works on its own, enabling ongoing accounting and insights, which helps in creating continuous strategic value. Harris talked to Sage's vision of propelling the industry forward into one that provides AI-led, real time strategic value to businesses in this way, where teams are no longer limited to cycles like the monthly close and quarterly financial reporting, which only provide point-in-time visibility.

Getting into the practicalities, when GenAI agents take over a defined workflow—such as handling routine interactions with a customer or automating end-to-end processes—they can then send the work to a human for approval, so that oversight is not lost. One tool, Sage Inbox, connects email and accounting software to simplify and automate communications and responses to them, for example. AI can continuously monitor business performance, identifying anomalies and building forecasts. If it finds an issue such as a change in a cash forecast, it can provide reasons and offer suggestions on how to spend cash. It can also be used to enhance office productivity, creating client communications or other professional documents.

These changes will continue to have an impact across the accounting ecosystem. "We should expect disruptions to traditional service lines that can lead to positive outcomes, but that have to be managed," Harris said. It's not only necessary to have a human monitoring GenAI output, it can actually offer a competitive edge. Firms that are able to demonstrate the human touch are going to be able to succeed. As AI makes technology solutions more accessible to all, relationships and quality service take on even more importance. Dynamic accountants are leaning into AI, seizing the opportunity to focus on their trusted advisor role.

Sage recently introduced its generative AI-powered productivity assistant, Sage Copilot – read more [here](#).

GenAI + CPAs = An explosion of use cases

Audit and assurance

As AI and Generative AI use grows, organizations and their stakeholders will be seeking reliable assurance that it's being used properly and that its output is accurate and trustworthy, particularly given the well-publicized related privacy, confidentiality, legal, reputational and security risks. The AICPA and CPA.com are taking steps to ensure that CPAs are prepared to leverage AI, to address the implications of AI in accounting and auditing, and to provide trust and confidence in AI and AI tools through assurance services.

To enable audit transformation, the profession is engaged in projects that include:

- The Dynamic Audit Solution (DAS), an audit workflow tool that uses technology, including AI, to reimagine audit methodology in accordance with standards.
- Examining technical policies, procedures and leadership in areas including audit and assurance to identify necessary updates or revisions considering the impact of AI. The ASB Technology Practice Aid provides an example of how AI can be used in the auditor's risk assessment.
- The profession is also working to address the audit implications of client use of AI and develop AI-related assurance and advisory solutions. The AICPA Assurance Standards Executive Committee AI Advisory Group and AI Working Group are assessing the impact of AI, including GenAI, on the financial statement audit and related assurance services such as System and Organization Control (SOC) reporting. The effort includes gathering use cases and considering the associated risks; developing a framework focused on AI risks and controls leveraging existing AI risk management frameworks; and collaborating with the Auditing Standards Board on any learnings that have implications related to standards and guidance.

Advisory services

Because GenAI can generate textual context and narrative around the financials, it is well suited for use in client advisory services (CAS) and similar situations where clarity around numbers is valued. This can alleviate a huge burden on a profession that is already time constrained, noted Enrico Palmerino, CEO of Botkeeper, which has launched Botkeeper Infinite, an AI-assisted CAS platform.

GenAI will allow for a massive increase in value to clients without requiring a commensurate investment of time, Palmerino said. While GenAI can't yet be relied on to solve problems without human review, CPAs can provide the model with a solution they've developed and ask for alternative options or enhancements. In the future, however, "we will become comfortable allowing GenAI to work off a volume of data that is so comprehensive that you could allow GenAI to take the first crack at solving the problem, then edit or tweak the response," he said.

Choosing the right product is also critical. "If another firm picks the right solution and you don't, it will have an incremental gain or improvement over yours," he said. "The rate at which they start to eat into your existing client base will be faster than ever."

Once AI and GenAI use becomes more universal, CPAs can differentiate themselves by using the time they've gained to develop a deeper understanding of the client—their priorities, hurdles, goals and the dynamics of their business. They can then use GenAI to offer highly customized advice and insights. "It provides the opportunity to do that 5% more," Palmerino said.

Tax

AI can automate tax preparation tasks that would take hours or weeks and tackle them in minutes. As a result, “CPAs can spend time on projects that are higher margin or more intellectually stimulating,” said Eyal Shinar, founder and CEO of AI tax preparation platform Black Ore. CPAs can use it to upload or drag and drop a client file and receive a completed 1040, plus workpapers, in minutes, incorporating complex elements such as schedules and K-1s. In addition to automating data extraction, the system’s native AI brain has been trained to think like an accountant and interpret the tax code based on the unique personalized circumstances of each return.

Another platform, Instead by Corvee, can help CPAs determine whether a client qualifies for an R&D credit, write memos from 2,500 to more than 10,000 words supporting the position, and complete the credit all the way to support the filing. The Instead AI Tax Assistant can guide practitioners through completing the credit for federal and state jurisdictions.

AI can simplify research tasks. Reviewing complicated documents such as legislation can be difficult when relying solely on text-based search. The [CPA.com Generative AI Toolkit and a tax use case](#) describes how large language models make it easier to surface relevant sections by searching for verbatim excerpts and combining the breadth of AI with human judgment.

Practice management

Firms of all sizes are finding ways to make the most of AI’s benefits internally while effectively mitigating its risks. Examples include:

- Schellman built a GPT to test certain controls in its cybersecurity audits, a task that can include reviewing both structured and unstructured data in lengthy documents. When Shelly (Schellman’s AI tool) was asked to find specific words in clients’ password parameters, the GPT tested 85 clients in about five minutes, saving 90 to 100 hours of work just on one control, said CEO Avani Desai, CPA. “It allows us to take the burden off our highly paid technology auditors who don’t want to go through

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a 100-page security policy, and focus them on more complicated issues,” she said. In another use case, an internal bot saved the equivalent of one FTE employee’s time by answering workers’ simple questions about company policies and procedures, using information available on the firm’s system. The HR team was able to shift its attention to performance management. Clients can also ask the bot questions about firm services based on available firm content. Another GPT scours the websites of the firm’s top 100 clients to search for new services opportunities, leadership changes, and other key details. “This would have taken an analyst hundreds of hours to do,” Desai said.

- BPM LLP has leveraged Microsoft OpenAI to develop a secure GPT bot service for its colleagues. The interface is much like ChatGPT. However, the internally developed bot has some distinct advantages to its more commonly used interface as it exclusively utilizes trusted data sources to bolster its intelligence, references current policies, provides links to the publications it used to generate its responses, and delivers robust security through Azure single sign-on and DLP. “The bot has already helped the firm boost its operational efficiency by providing around-the-clock reliable tax expertise to staff when they need it most,” said Moe Asgharnia, CIO.
- Marcum LLP began its GenAI journey by developing processes, policies, training and a governance framework, as well as use cases and effective prompts. It ultimately launched AskMarcum.ai, a custom GenAI interface that employees can use at their desks and on their mobile devices. It was created for internal use to drive greater efficiencies in a secure environment. The firm monitors prompt use to analyze effectiveness and tracks question frequency to plan for training needs. The firm’s involvement in AI has also attracted new clients eager to work with a firm using advanced technologies, said Peter Scavuzzo, chief information and digital officer, Marcum LLP.

- At Yogi CPA, the firm has used GenAI to automate research, enhance productivity and move work to the review stage more quickly, according to Zunie Nguyen, CPA/PFS. The six-person firm also deploys GenAI in researching prospects before engaging in introductory calls and in writing the proposal. The seven-person firm also deploys GenAI in researching prospects before submitting a proposal and in writing the proposal. In its CFO and tax practices, AI provides bullets on new tax changes and develops marketing materials and other communications.

When Pascal Finette asked roundtable participants at the Digital CPA Conference to work together to brainstorm potential applications, other ideas included:

- Load a financial statement into a non-public GenAI platform and ask it to assess the health of the organization and perform macro level analytics.
- Ask AI how to automate the accounting system and then explain the changes in an email to staff.
- Generate an easy-to-understand tax infographic for a client.
- Perform predictive analysis on client sentiment. Provide GenAI with emails to and from clients and ask it to identify missed opportunities or any possible negative change in the relationship.
- Build a bot that role-plays scenarios to educate and train staff.
- An example from Finette: Have your AI talk to my AI. One partner uses AI to write a lengthy email to another partner. With no time to read it, the recipient asks their own AI to summarize the email in bullet points.

Responsible GenAI use: A pressing concern

Organizations will not be able to enjoy the full benefits of AI if it is not considered a safe and trustworthy tool. Emerging regulations generally call for AI systems to be explainable, accountable, robust, able to protect privacy and customers, and subject to effective human oversight, according to Alyssa Lefavre Škopac, head of global partnerships and growth at the Responsible Artificial Intelligence (RAI) Institute. Failure to use AI responsibly could result in financial penalties under new regulations (see below), as well as reputational damage.

More than 50% of organizations are subject to existing non-AI regulations that also apply to their use of AI, but only 59% of them feel they are prepared to address emerging AI rules, according to RAI Institute research. Companies will also need to consider vendors' responsible AI efforts. While 53% of organizations said they had only bought AI tools externally, rather than building their own, 55% of organizations have discovered an AI failure in a tool they bought.

The greatest mistakes that organizations make in addressing responsible use concerns fall into four categories:

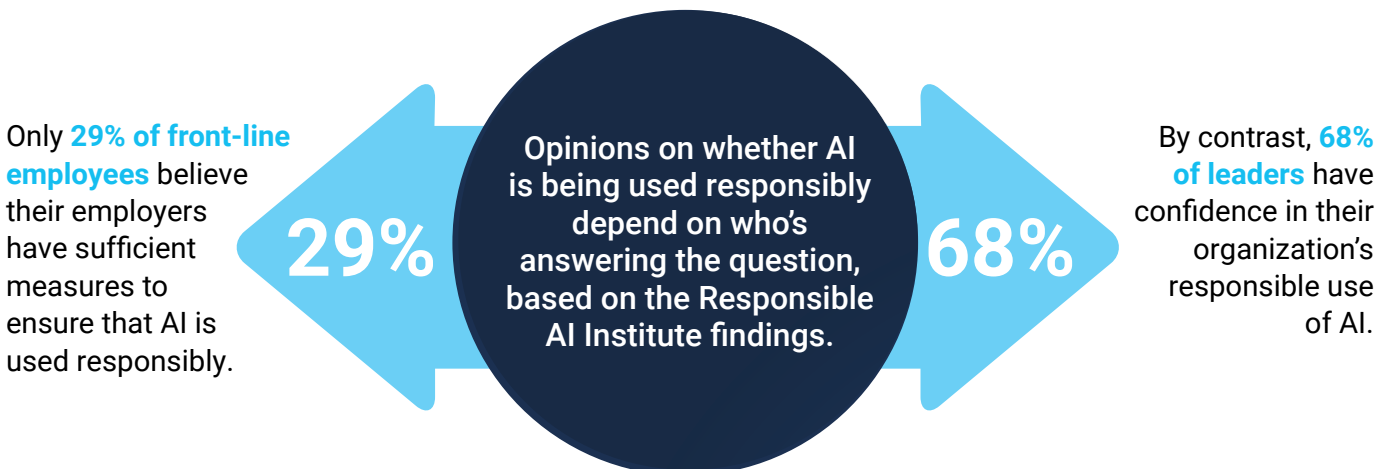
1. Idleness. Some companies are accruing technical debt, leaving them unprepared to comply with regulations when they arrive, according to Škopac.

This can increase business risk or even cause irreversible harm. Risks that aren't understood and addressed now will only have to be mitigated later, possibly with a compliance deadline looming. Organizations will then have to deal with a disruptive and costly effort that could offset any cost savings that AI use delivers.

2. Myopia. Focusing solely on one area of AI and allowing risk exposure elsewhere.

3. Failure to scale: Organizations without a cross functional picture of their AI efforts may focus solely on IT or similar functions and fail to include other areas where AI is having an important impact, such as HR or procurement.

4. Being opaque: This involves failure to communicate expectations internally and externally. To deploy GenAI without running afoul of its recognized risks and limitations, organizations should create their own responsible use policies to address threats to privacy, confidentiality, copyright and intellectual property risks and other issues.



Current frameworks and regulations

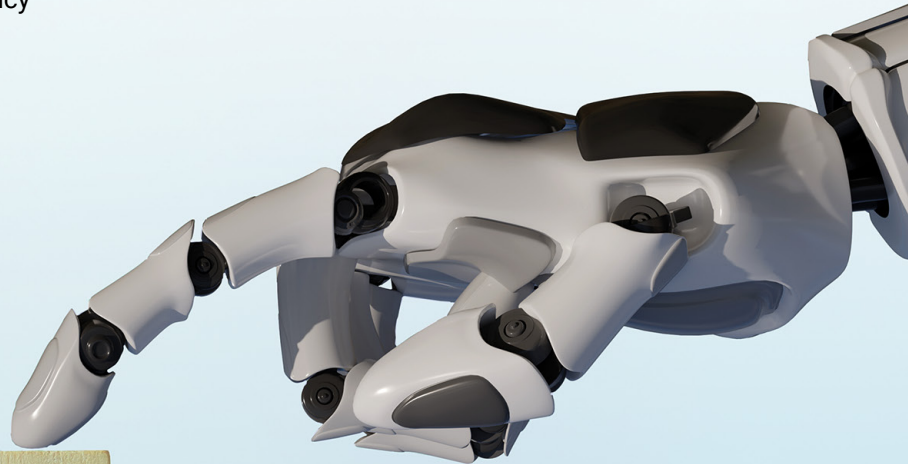
Here's a sampling of emerging regulations and frameworks for AI systems on an international, national and state level, as of January 2024:

- The draft [European Union AI Act](#) is a far-reaching guideline that is expected to influence policymaking going forward. The proposed Canadian Artificial Intelligence and Data Act also carries financial penalties and possible criminal punishment for noncompliant systems.
- A [White House executive order](#) sets standards for a federal approach to AI safety and security, addressing privacy, equity and civil rights concerns, and establishes protections for consumers, patients, students and workers, among other actions. While U.S. businesses are not required to follow the executive order, many may be motivated to comply because the federal government is the single largest consumer in the world. Other agency guidance and state law may apply, as well.

- The [New York City Law on Automated Employment Decision Tools](#) prohibits employers and employment agencies from using an automated employment decision tool in the city without ensuring that a bias audit was performed and provide required notices, with penalties of up to \$1,500 per violation, per user, per day.

In a landmark step, the United Nations General Assembly in March 2024 unanimously adopted its first [resolution on regulating AI](#). The resolution urged member states to develop regulatory and governance approaches and frameworks that support safe, secure and trustworthy use of AI. It also called for closing the digital divide between wealthy and developing economies and acknowledged the value of leveraging AI to help reach sustainable development goals.

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The human touch

As mentioned, for the time being at least, responsible use includes ensuring that people have the last word on anything that GenAI produces. Technology should be used to prepare about 80% to 90% of the work, based on templates and priorities set by a professional, said Dima Kuchin, chief data officer at Sphere.

More sophisticated versions of the technology can work as an intellectual partner, remembering context from past interactions. In both cases, the professional can be significantly faster and more efficient, he said. GenAI models can perform tasks that might have once required a senior data scientist. Staff will still need some tech knowledge, “but the playing field has been significantly leveled,” Kuchin said. He predicts that a model like ChatGPT or a custom solution will be built into every system going forward.

Preparing for GenAI regulation

The AICPA and CPA.com AI Symposium featured a conversation with Leah Li, senior adviser to U.S. Representative Derek Kilmer (D.-Wash.), who is chair of the Coalition Artificial Intelligence Working Group and a member of the Congressional AI Caucus. Despite calls for more effective regulation of AI, there is still a patchwork of guidelines on its use.

While AI has long been seen as a niche issue in Congress, its wide impact is now better understood, as is the need for responsible use of AI that addresses privacy issues and equity and civil rights issues, as well as the impact on jobs. The education of Congress members is another consideration so that policymakers can make informed decisions and create laws that reflect national values.

- Issues still to be addressed include:
 - Misinformation spread by AI that can impact major political events like elections. Examples include the robocalls that tried to suppress voting in one primary using a fake voice that sounded like a candidate.

- What agencies will be involved in regulating this area.
- How attestation or assurance will work and which frameworks will be used.
- How independence in technology audits would be defined.
- Guidelines for international collaboration on AI regulation.

The session underscored the value of the contributions that the profession is making in the early stages of regulation. “Being at the table is important so that the profession is positioned appropriately at the global, national and U.S. state level,” said Susan Coffey, CPA, CGMA, CEO—public accounting, AICPA & CIMA.

Stringent, hard-wired laws are not likely to be effective given the rapid change inherent to the AI ecosystem, suggested Bill Whyman, founder and principal of Tech Dynamics. “There’s a lot of interest in private sector-created standards and private sector audits of those standards,” he said. Early engagement can allow the profession to influence how standards are set and implemented—and ensure that proper guidance is in place before bad outcomes happen. “Get in front of this,” he said, “and it can make a big impact.”

The National Institute of Standards and Technology AI Risk Management Framework, one of the first frameworks on the topic, can be found in its [Trustworthy and Responsible AI Resource Center](#).

Governing GenAI risk

How can organizations position themselves for whatever type of regulations may ultimately emerge? To maintain flexibility in a constantly evolving landscape, organizations can develop a governance structure around their AI efforts, similar in nature to what they might use for cyber risk governance, said Whyman. It can be led by the board's risk management subcommittee or be part of a cross organizational effort run by the CIO or CFO, with input from areas such as finance, accounting, IT, compliance and legal. Among other things, simply having a specific AI governance structure is a good first step to minimize reputational and other damage in the event of a disaster.

In the absence of regulation, as they implement new technologies, companies should perform a pre-deployment risk review, including potential mitigation steps. Just as consumers review food labels before buying a product, companies should ask AI model builders for a system or model card to understand the model as well as possible so they can put in place appropriate guardrails, Whyman said.

He recommended that organizations focus on existing risk areas and assume they will also be threats in an AI environment. Fraud committed through AI is one example.

While much attention is being paid to the potential for using AI to identify and mitigate fraud, bad actors are also examining its uses. On another front, organizations are already required to address potential bias and inequity in hiring and promotion, and AI risk will also be a factor in those areas. Similarly, organizations may need to set guidelines for AI use that relate to antitrust and price fixing issues. The Federal Trade Commission is already [examining](#) big tech companies' investments in leading AI startups. To understand the AI risk landscape, "you don't have to push to the bleeding edge areas," Whyman said. "There are already enough meat-and-potato issues to start with."

AI can enable decision-making but, once again, human review is critical in sensitive areas. Whyman envisions a situation in which an AI agent recommends a solution that could actually lead to a bad outcome, and a human fails to review the solution before it is implemented. This lack of oversight "could lead to actions that have real consequences," Whyman said.

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Planning for the future

A forward-looking perspective can help leaders and firms better tackle AI, according to Jason Staats, CPA, a practitioner and founder of Realize, an online community for accounting firm owners. Keep in mind that:

- This is the easiest it will ever be. Adapting to change is easier sooner rather than later.
- Agility will be rewarded in the coming years. Enabling bottom-up adoption in the firm will drive greater AI proficiency. Helpful resources and a use-case feedback loop make it possible to promote and leverage a team approach.
- A culture of curiosity protects a business from change. With shared responsibility and openness to change, firms are better prepared to solve

problems and address whatever comes next.

The more curiosity is distributed across a practice, the more great ideas there will be. Resist the urge to assign curiosity about AI to a specific team, but instead make it a common goal.

- Proactively enforce responsible use policies with guidelines on how to use AI and the risks to avoid. Defining the boundaries and the right way to use an app liberates everyone in the firm. Insurance carriers or IT providers or consultants may have tips that prevent firms from having to build policies from scratch.
- Concentrate on what you can control. Keep a laser focus on clients' pain points and enabling your team.

Conclusion

While 2023 was about understanding and exploring GenAI, going forward the focus will be on leveraging GenAI to advance CPAs' business value proposition, something clients will also be prioritizing.

Fortunately, CPAs are well prepared to embrace advanced technologies. "The profession is great at being early adopters," noted Barry Melancon, CPA, CGMA, CEO of the AICPA & CIMA, pointing to its rapid adoption of PCs, the internet and cloud computing. Once again, the profession's ability to integrate a new technology into its business models will present rich opportunities and capabilities. CPA.com will continue to monitor new developments and provide information and resources that will position the profession to be informed and prepared in the new AI ecosystem.

CPA.com AI ecosystem initiatives

- [AICPA and CPA.com AI Symposium](#)
- AICPA and CPA.com [2024 Startup Accelerator AI cohort](#)
- CPA.com [Generative AI initiative](#), including the GenAI Toolkit, use cases and resources
- AI-focused agenda sessions at the [Digital CPA](#) and [ENGAGE conferences](#), as well as thought leader activities including the [Executive Roundtable](#)
- Collaboration with solution providers

The [CPA.com Generative AI Toolkit](#) is a roadmap for accounting and finance professionals seeking to leverage the transformative impact of GenAI. It includes seven steps to building an AI strategy, use cases, a security checklist, and a review of GenAI challenges and limitations.



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