



AI Adoption Accelerates in Accounting, Yet Fragmented Tools Keep Efficiency Just Out of Reach, According to New Progress Software Report

May 12, 2026

State of Accounting 2026 finds accountants embracing AI and automation—yet disconnected systems and inefficient processes continue to limit productivity and consistent client experiences

BURLINGTON, Mass., May 12, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- [Progress Software](#) (Nasdaq: PRGS), the trusted provider of AI-powered digital experience and infrastructure software, today announced the release of its *State of Accounting 2026* report. The nationwide survey of U.S.-based accounting professionals, conducted by Regina Corso Consulting, shows a profession moving fast on AI and automation—while tool sprawl, fragmented systems and inefficient workflows continue to slow firms down and strain the client experience. [The full report is available here.](#)

Even with ongoing operational challenges, enthusiasm for the profession remains high. Nearly all accountants (98%) say they love their work—citing problem-solving, career stability and meaningful client impact as top motivators. But efficiency gaps persist: three-quarters (75%) say their workflows involve too many steps, and 57% report they can do their jobs effectively—but not efficiently—highlighting the disconnect between the work accountants want to do and what today's systems enable.

"Accountants are committed to delivering exceptional client experiences and outcomes, but too much of their time is still consumed by manual processes, disconnected tools and operational friction," said Loren Jarrett, EVP and GM, Digital Experience at Progress Software. "The *State of Accounting 2026* report makes it clear that accounting firms are in need of secure and governed AI-powered technology that removes friction in their daily tasks and enables accountants to focus on higher-value client work and strategic advisory."

Key Findings from the *State of Accounting 2026* Report

- **Client experience is the top priority—yet hard to deliver consistently** Client experience ranks as the number one priority for individual accountants (97%) and their firms (98%). Yet only half say it's easy to deliver that experience consistently, largely due to operational inefficiencies.
- **AI is already mainstream—and accelerating** Today, 84% of accountants use AI for tasks such as document summarization, workflow routing and validation, security enhancement and client advisory support. Concerns about data privacy, bias and governance continue to shape how firms scale responsibly.
- **Technology is essential, but too often fragmented:** Nearly all respondents (98%) say they need technology that streamlines processes and improves efficiency. Still, 61% say they're slowed by switching between too many tools, and 65% report a lack of automation for routine accounting tasks.
- **Automation is trusted but underused:** While 97% believe automation enhances the client experience, only 24% say a large portion of their work is automated. Integration challenges, security concerns, budget constraints and leadership resistance remain key barriers.
- **Secure document exchange remains a major friction point:** 61% of accountants say document exchanges aren't secure enough, reinforcing the need to protect sensitive data without sacrificing productivity or collaboration.

"The big opportunity for businesses right now is the use of AI," said Darren Forish, Shareholder, Tax Division, LBMC. "Find a way to incorporate it into your business and make sure you can grow with it. Clients are seeing that and wanting to try out that company because they're forward looking."

To overcome these barriers, firms are prioritizing tool consolidation, streamlined collaboration and embedded automation and security. Solutions like Progress® ShareFile® help simplify client onboarding, reduce tool sprawl and securely manage document-heavy workflows—so teams can work faster, better safeguard sensitive information and deliver more consistent client experiences without adding complexity.

About the Survey

The *State of Accounting 2026* report is based on a nationwide survey of 311 U.S.-based accounting professionals across accounting, tax, audit and bookkeeping firms, as well as in-house roles at organizations of varying sizes. The research explores job satisfaction, efficiency, client experience priorities, technology adoption, automation, AI usage and security challenges shaping the future of accounting.

To further explore the findings from the *State of Accounting 2026* report, Progress will host a webinar on May 21, featuring insights from industry experts. [Click here to register.](#)

About Progress Software

[Progress Software](#) (Nasdaq: PRGS) empowers organizations to achieve transformational success in the face of disruptive change. Our software enables our customers to develop, deploy and manage responsible AI-powered applications and personalized digital experiences with agility and ease. Businesses of all sizes get a trusted provider in Progress, with the products, expertise and vision they need to turn AI disruption into a competitive advantage. Millions of developers and technologists at hundreds of thousands of organizations depend on Progress every day. Learn more at www.progress.com.

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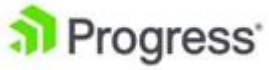
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Source: Progress Software Corporation