

Discussion on the Influence of Accounting mputerization on Audit

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Abstract. The implementation of accounting computerization has greatly improved the speed and accuracy of accounting information processing, which is an unprecedented leap in the history of accounting development. However, the popularization and application of accounting computerization are bound to affect audit work; the traditional audit has been unable to adapt to the new situation and new requirements of computerization. Accounting computerization promotes the change of audit theory, technology, and method, but at the same time, it also causes new situations such as computer fraud, brings new audit risks, and puts forward higher requirements for auditors. This paper discusses the influence of accounting computerization on audit work and puts forward some suggestions and countermeasures for the existing problems of audit work under the condition of computerization.

Keywords: Accounting computerization, audit risk, audit countermeasures.

1. Introduction

With the development of the economy and the wide application of electronic computers, a number of accounting software companies in China have developed rapidly and provided stable, reliable, and high-quality financial accounting software for society. Computerized accounting has been implemented in various industries, and general accounting software has been adopted by administrative and public institutions. Computerized accounting has become the mainstream direction of accounting development. The implementation of accounting computerization greatly improves the speed and accuracy of accounting information processing and can provide users with timely and accurate accounting information. It is an unprecedented leap in the history of accounting development. However, the popularization and application of accounting computerization are bound to affect audit work, which puts forward new requirements for auditors. The traditional audit method cannot adapt to the new situation of accounting computerization, how to deal with computer fraud, and other new problems. It also puts forward higher requirements for auditors. This paper discusses the influence of accounting computerization on audit work and puts forward some audit countermeasures and suggestions in view of the existing problems of audit work under the condition of computerization.

2. The impact of accounting computerization on audit work

2.1. Save audit time and costs

Computerized accounting uses the computer instead of manual labor to complete accounting, reimbursement, and other financial activities. To a large extent, this can avoid accounting records being prone to errors, omissions, and other errors. Verification of vouchers is mainly completed by manual work in the traditional audit method, and the key of the data cross-checking relation in the voucher is connected by the cross-index of the annotation, so the workload is heavy and errors are easy to occur. If there is repetition or omission, a lot of finishing work will be carried out, and heavy repetitive work will waste time and manpower. With the increasing number of audit tasks, traditional audit methods are becoming more and more difficult to meet the current audit needs because of their limitations in operation and low efficiency.

Accounting computerization allows auditors to no longer spend a lot of time and energy in the audit process to check for errors in accounting records and no longer need to recruit a large number of auditors to conduct detailed audits of the accounting record process.

2.2. Audit risk brought by computerization

Due to the computerization of accounting data processing, under the control of computer-aided systems, the possibility of errors in business processing is reduced, and the inherent risks are controlled to a certain extent, but at the same time, the control risks are more difficult to determine. Because of the openness of network accounting and the sharing of accounting information resources, the possibility of illegal modification and theft of accounting data has increased. Because of the attacks of computer viruses and network hackers, it is difficult to guarantee the security and integrity of accounting data. Under the condition of accounting computerization, accounting data are stored on magnetic media, so it is difficult to find fraud, which increases the risk of audit. The computer level of auditors will also directly affect the effectiveness of audit procedures.

2.3. The traditional audit trail disappears

Under the condition of manual bookkeeping, all kinds of account books and accounting statements, from original vouchers to accounting vouchers, are stored on paper. Auditors can conduct a direct or reverse investigation, a detailed investigation, or a spot check on these audit clues to obtain the required accounting information. After the introduction of accounting computerization to deal with accounting information, all the processing, from the input of economic business data to the output of accounting statements, is automatically completed by the computer according to a pre-set program. Traditional methods have become more and more difficult to apply, and auditors cannot identify and track these codes without computer knowledge and technology.

2.4. Changes in audit content

Under manual conditions, the audit method focuses mainly on checking the paper information, and the responsibility is attributed to each processor, so the responsibility is easy to determine and the results are more intuitive. Under the condition of accounting computerization, the use of computers makes accounting information systems improve efficiency, expand functions, and expand the content of audit work. Audit work includes not only the audit of the raw data input by the computerized system and the data files stored in the computer but also computerized system procedures.

Auditors need to spend time and energy understanding the structure and function of the computerized system to ensure that the system can handle accounting information legally, accurately, truthfully, and completely. If there have been some problems with the stability and integrity of the accounting computerization software itself, the reliability of the computer hardware, the reliability of the internal control of the accounting computerization software, and other aspects, a series of risks will arise. Whether the processing of the system is legal, safe, and reliable is directly related to the processing and control functions of the computer system. On the one hand, the accounting information is processed automatically by the computer according to the program. If the system makes mistakes in the development or operation process, the computer may process all the relevant accounting information in the same wrong way according to the given program, thus causing a large number of misstatements. On the other hand, if the security of the computerized software and the reliability of the internal control have problems, it may lead to lawbreakers using system loopholes or maliciously tampering with the program to encroach on the interests of the enterprise. The characteristics of computerized accounting information systems and their inherent risks determine that the audit content should increase the review of computer system processing and control functions.

2.5. Increased cost of audit work

Accounting computerization makes accounting data available for the generation of methods, and processing methods have undergone fundamental changes. The vast majority of visual information is

converted to internal processing and storage, resulting in audit methods and implementation steps that are more complex and difficult to implement. Under the traditional audit mode, most of the auditors engaged in audit work are professionals who master rich accounting knowledge and audit methods, but the accounting computerization system puts forward new requirements for auditors: The auditors need to have certain computer knowledge and have a deep understanding and grasp of the input and output control, data processing, and possible fraud of the accounting computerization system.

3. Problems existing in audit work under the condition of accounting computerization

3.1. Imperfection of audit laws, regulations, and standards under accounting computerization

In the audit environment of accounting computerization, the current laws and regulations on the rights and responsibilities of auditors and the obligations of the auditees are not perfect, and there is a lack of laws and regulations to restrict accounting computerization (such as the legal effect and preservation requirements of electronic vouchers, electronic contracts, and electronic signatures). In addition, the auditing standards and norms related to computerized accounting issued by the National Audit Office and the China Institute of Certified Public Accountants are general and lacking in the content of computer information system audits and e-commerce audits.

3.2. Low efficiency and reliability of audit

Auditors may ignore the internal processing and control of the computer only for the input of the original data or request the auditees to print out the accounting vouchers, journals, subsidiary ledgers, and subject summary table for review. In this way, the CPA can still use traditional audit methods, completely bypassing computer processing. On the one hand, this does not give full play to the advantages of fast and accurate data processing in computer audits, resulting in low efficiency of audit work; on the other hand, ignoring the test of the computerized system itself results in low reliability of audit results.

3.3. The knowledge structure of auditors is unbalanced

Computer auditing is a cross-section of accounting, auditing, network technology, and computer technology. Computer auditing requires auditors to master accounting, auditing knowledge, information systems, and computer and network technology. At present, there is a lack of auditors with corresponding capabilities. Some auditors are not familiar with computer audits, do not understand the risks of computer processing and network technology applications, and do not know how to effectively control these risks. Although computer technicians can master computer and network technology, their accounting and auditing knowledge is relatively lacking. Therefore, the lack of high-level and compound talents with the ability to develop audit software and rich accounting and auditing knowledge restricts the development of audit under the condition of accounting computerization in China.

3.4. Lack of professional audit software and a unified data interface

The development of audit software needs compound talents who have the ability to develop software and are familiar with accounting and audit work at the same time. The development cycle of audit software is very long, and the market demand is small, which makes the development of audit software far more difficult than financial software. As a result, software companies are keen on high-margin, low-difficulty, low-maintenance financial software and rarely involve auditing software. In addition, some companies develop their own financial software, which usually does not leave a data channel, which also causes difficult problems in the development of audit software. The whole software market lacks high-quality universal software, which also makes auditors have to stick with traditional audit methods.

4. Audit countermeasures under the condition of accounting computerization

4.1. Perfecting computerized audit standards and guidelines

Auditing standards are the standards to guide and measure the audit work and also the guides to improve the quality of the audit work. In the computerized accounting system, the characteristics of data storage media and the automation of data processing cause poor visibility of the audited system, which makes economic crime more hidden and increases the difficulty and risk of audit work. Obviously, the traditional auditing standards have been unable to adapt to the new audit situation. Therefore, in the formulation of standards and guidelines, we should learn from the advanced experience of foreign countries, evaluate the internal control of accounting information systems, standardize the professional competence of auditors, and standardize the process of accounting computerization audits so that China's accounting computerization audit work is in line with international audit standards and improves the quality of China's audit work.

4.2. Strengthen the audit of the accounting software system

The change in data processing mode of accounting computerization also puts forward new requirements for audit technology and audit methods, and the audit of accounting computerization systems should be strengthened in audit work. Audit procedures and methods need to adapt to the new environment of accounting computerization and the new characteristics of the audit object. The new accounting information processing mode has changed the traditional accounting information input, processing, and output modes. The auditor must audit whether the accounting information system application program is accurate in order to determine whether the system data processing result is safe and reliable.

4.3. Adopt new audit methods to grasp audit clues

In order to ensure the authenticity of accounting information and prevent the occurrence of fraudulent acts such as making false accounts and illegally tampering with computer programs, auditors need to keep pace with the times, adapt to the audit environment of accounting computerization, and adopt new audit methods to check the processing of accounting information. Different auditing methods should be adopted for the auditees at different stages of accounting computerization. First, use computer networking to assist audit work. The method of network auditing involves using computer network transmission so that auditors can check the correctness and legitimacy of the accounting information processing of the auditees at any time. The second is to adopt a reprocessing method. The auditor must review the computer data processing results and reprocess them with the original program and data to see if they are consistent with the original results, but this method cannot detect the problems of the computer system itself. The third is programming verification method. Auditors should understand the process of accounting treatment, design and compile the procedures suitable for the inspection of the accounting computerization process of the auditees according to the requirements of the audit, and judge whether the accounting computerization accounting treatment process is accurate and legal.

4.4. Improve the professional competence of auditors

Under the condition of accounting computerization, the change in audit technology, audit clues, internal control, and audit content puts forward higher requirements for the quality of auditors. Only when auditors are proficient in accounting and auditing operations and understand computer information processing can they conduct effective audit work. Auditors will not be able to review its internal control if they lack knowledge about computerized accounting system characteristics and risks. The lack of knowledge of computer application technology will lead auditors to be unable to audit the computerized accounting system.

4.5. Speed up the development of audit software technology

In order to adapt to the development of various financial software under the environment of accounting computerization, we must speed up the development of general audit software and promote the commercialization of audit software. In addition, because the accounting computerization system of the auditees cannot be unified and may be commercial accounting software or self-developed accounting software, the complexity of the system and the operating platform may be greatly different, which will bring great difficulties to the audit work. This needs to unify the data interface of the accounting computerization system so as to effectively solve the input bottleneck problem in the computerized audit system, improve the audit efficiency, simplify the design of the software, and reduce the audit cost. Once this method is implemented, auditors have the right to require the auditees to provide a unified audit data interface in the system to carry out audit work; otherwise, auditors have the right to adjust audit opinions according to specific circumstances and require the auditees to improve.

5. Summary

Accounting computerization not only improves the efficiency of accounting information processing but also brings a series of new risks, such as network attacks and computer fraud. Similarly, if auditors can use computerized accounting systems in their work, they can greatly improve the efficiency of audit work and reduce the cost of audit work. However, if auditors have an insufficient understanding of computerized systems, it is difficult to identify new audit risks brought by computerized systems. At present, the application of information systems in audit work still faces many problems, such as the fact that the relevant audit standards are not perfect and auditors lack knowledge of computer technology and efficient audit software. In order to solve these problems, it is necessary to improve the corresponding audit standards and cultivate interdisciplinary talents who understand audit professional knowledge and computer software technology.

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