

Public auditing has been notably and enduringly affected by the adjustments necessary during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Public Auditing in the Pandemic Era

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Introduction

The auditing profession is a vital piece of the corporate world, with an escalating demand for standardized investigations and reports on the presentation of companies' financial statements.

Auditors exercise professional judgment to plan, identify risks, design, and implement procedures to form their opinion. This opinion provides the highest level of assurance that a company is in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards.

Traditionally, audits have been conducted in-person, with heavy reliance upon physical presence and hardcopy documentation, but as modern technology began the shift towards new methods, the 2020 pandemic accelerated it significantly.

Methods

To conduct my research and draw conclusions about these impacts, I combined traditional and experiential methods.

I first studied the auditing field by taking an audit course at the University of Texas at Tyler. I then extended this education to obtain a thorough understanding of its functionality, both past and present, by examining various sources, from peer-reviewed articles to publications released by accounting firms in the field.

I then was able to enter the field directly as an audit intern for a firm in Dallas, Texas for the spring semester, and witness firsthand the implementation of old and new auditing procedures.

Results

- **Audit efficiency**—companies that were slow to adopt paperless policies now have played catch-up and can operate more efficiently. This allows for radically improved gathering of support, with instant client fulfillment of audit requests.
- **Cost effectiveness**— Many audits can now be conducted 100% remotely, which drastically reduces travelling time and expenses formerly associated with an audit.
- **Flexibility**— The widespread adoption of video meetings enables auditors to both collaborate with each other and make inquiries to the client with ease and accessibility.
- **New risks**— The changes also bring potential risks due to the at times limited nature of remote audits, without the ability to physically inspect or interact with the client company.