



THE WORLD OF ACCOUNTING HAS NEVER BEEN THE SAME—FOR STUDENTS, TEACHERS, OR ACTUAL PRACTITIONERS. OVER THE PAST TWO AND ONE-HALF YEARS, DR. JAN COLBERT, CPA AND JAMES R. MEANY PROFESSOR OF ACCOUNTANCY, HAS DILIGENTLY WORKED ON A WEB SITE THAT MAKES THE LIVES OF PEOPLE IN THE WORLD OF NUMBERS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS MUCH EASIER.

Dr. Colbert's web site provides lists and links to accounting journals that exist on the World Wide Web. For those involved in research, or for those who simply enjoy learning, this web site is a must see. Instead of spending hours and weeks on end using search engines and surfing the net, individuals interested in accounting are able to type less than 30 letters and have an abundance of electronic accounting journal information at their fingertips. Besides accountants, students and librarians use this web site. Dr. Colbert has even received international queries about journals on the site.

Accounting Research Simplified

BY SELINA SKAGGS

As a researcher, Dr. Colbert tries to keep up with accounting journals on a regular basis. "After reading an article one day about publishing books and journals electronically, I wondered how many accounting journals were doing this," she said, and the electronic accounting journal web site was born! As she has found, with the help of her colleagues, Dr. Richard Aldridge and Dr. Mark Ross, not all accounting journals have been bitten by the technology bug. However, of more than 300 accounting journals she has located, about 75% offer web-based access. This percentage changes at a rapid pace but Dr. Jan Colbert is right on top of it, with the help of her graduate assistant, Ibrahim Faruqi, and the Information Technology Consultant for the College of Business.

Dr. Jan Colbert works for the pleasure of thinking deeply about issues. This attribute has led her to research. She enjoys research for what it is—a search for knowledge. Dr. Colbert's secret to success is taking this new

auditing within companies. Interestingly enough, internal auditing is not just involved with the financial aspect of a company, but with the company's compliance with regulations, such as the rules of the Environmental Protection Agency, she said. Fraud and how accountants can search for it have also been hot topics of Dr. Colbert's. Her fraud research has included examining fraud standards and how to apply them. Her work directly aids accountants as they strive to uncover and prevent fraud. Locating fraud helps entities recover their losses, while preventing fraud saves time and effort from prosecuting illegal acts.

Some of Dr. Colbert's more recent articles have stemmed from her work as a member of the Kentucky State Board of Accountancy. The Board deals with many aspects of being licensed as a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) in Kentucky, including cases brought against CPAs in this state. Dr. Colbert has written about these actual cases and, more importantly, she has examined "how

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knowledge and applying it in new ways. Her main research interests have stemmed from her doctoral dissertation entitled "An Investigation of Auditors' Judgments of Inherent Risk in Inventory." Various types of risks in auditing remain one of her biggest research topics. Some of the risks she has written about include inherent risk, which has to do with the possibility that the account contains a misstatement, and fraud risk, which involves clients altering the financial statements or misappropriating assets. She also conducts research in the area of sampling; this topic embraces determining how the items the accountant chooses to test are selected.

As the author of over 70 publications, Dr. Colbert has delved deeply into a number of research topics. Along with her continued efforts with the electronic accounting journals and her interest in risks in auditing and sampling, Dr. Colbert has researched new auditing standards enacted by the AICPA (American Institute of Certified Public Accountants) and how practitioners should apply these new standards. She has explored both internal control and internal





exactly CPAs get themselves into trouble.” That is, as with any profession, there may be a small number of complaints regarding the work of CPAs. These are investigated according to state law and appropriate action is then taken by the Board.

Dr. Colbert doesn’t just run a one-woman show. Along with her individual publications, she has, within the last few years, written three articles with students in the Master of Professional Accountancy program. These articles stemmed from papers the students had written for her class. Another of her articles was in collaboration with a marketing professor at Western who had actually experienced fraud in her family business. She also actively collaborates with WKU accounting faculty. Dr. Jan Colbert shares the research process with colleagues from Western and from other higher education institutions in about one-half of her publications.

WKU’s three goals for professors—research, student learning, and public service—are beautifully fulfilled by Dr. Colbert. As the James R. Meany Professor in Western’s Department of Accounting and Finance since 1993, Dr. Colbert’s main job is to do research and promote research within the department. In addition, Dr. Colbert teaches three different courses—introduction to financial accounting, auditing and assurance services, and the graduate level auditing and assurance class. “In teaching, I have the feeling that maybe I am helping others a little bit to be au-

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ditors in the real world,” Dr. Colbert says. She especially enjoys teaching students in the master’s program because they analyze the material and, as a result, ask the most thought-provoking questions.

At least once a month, Dr. Jan Colbert’s alarm clock rings at four a.m. While the sound of this alarm marks the end of her sleep for the night, it begins a day or more of service to the profession. On these early morning days, Dr. Colbert travels to Louisville for meetings of the Kentucky State Board of Accountancy. Before each meeting, she has already spent approximately a day in preparation.

Dr. Colbert was appointed to the State Board in 1998 by the governor and is serving a four-year term. For Dr. Colbert, serving on the Board “leads to a better understanding of the challenges practitioners face.” This understanding assists her in both her research and teaching. Her experiences solidify her belief that the research she does in the academic world makes a difference to accounting practitioners. She is also able to bring the cutting-edge issues facing CPAs in Kentucky back to the classroom, thus enriching students’ learning.

Dr. Colbert is a CIA (Certified Internal Auditor) and DABFE (Diplomat of the American Board of Forensic Examiners). Her DABFE was earned as a result of her experience, expertise, and education. When asked why she likes accounting, she responded, “I like its relative preciseness. I enjoy the detail work.” Between her research, updating her electronic accounting journal web site, and by simply being involved with accounting, she will have no trouble finding details to intrigue her mind and stimulate her inquisitive nature.

The innovative accounting journals web site designed by Colbert, Aldridge, and Ross is at URL: < <http://atech.wku.edu/~acctjournals> >.