
401(k) assets top \$3 trillion: SPARK

By Editor Test *Wed, Apr 20, 2011*

We often hear that Americans don't save, but their collective retirement savings are worth about \$16 trillion, according to research by RG Wuelving & Associates, Inc. for the SPARK Institute.

Assets in 401(k) plans grew by 13% and reached a record \$3.075 trillion in 2010 according to the latest *Marketplace Update* report from the Society of Professional Asset-Managers and Record Keepers (SPARK) and The SPARK Institute.

“Strong performance across all equity sectors, especially the U.S. market over the second half of 2010, coupled with positive returns in the bond markets, helped push total retirement market assets to an estimated \$16 trillion by year-end 2010,” said Bob Wuelving, president of RG Wuelving & Associates, Inc., which prepared the report.

The number of 401(k) plans rose to 536,000 in 2010, covering more than 74 million workers in the U.S. in 2010, up from 510,500 plans and 73.4 million participants in 2009.

Additional statistics include:

- Nearly 70% of participant account balances in equities at the end of 2010, including the equity portion of balanced, life cycle, risk-based asset allocation and target date funds.
- Total assets in IRAs reached almost \$4.5 trillion in 2010.
- An estimated 20-22,000 new 401(k) plans will be formed in 2011, primarily among small companies.

The *Marketplace Update* includes key data on the retirement plan market, as well as commentary on industry issues. It is distributed exclusively to members of SPARK and The SPARK Institute.

SPARK was founded in 1989 as an inter-industry group of investment managers and service providers, particularly in the defined contribution retirement plan market. Current membership includes over 250 companies representing a broad cross-section of banks, mutual funds, insurance companies, third party administrators, trade clearing firms and benefits consultants.

The SPARK Institute provides research, education, testimony and comments on pending legislative and regulatory issues to members of Congress and relevant government agency officials. Collectively, SPARK and SPARK Institute member companies serve approximately 70 million participants in 401(k) and other defined contribution plans.