



Adobe® Solutions Acrobat® eForms

“Adobe Acrobat is integral to our document management solution. We couldn’t utilize electronic documents with digital signatures unless the documents retained the exact appearance of the originals.”

Mike Jones
Manager of IS
Orange County Planning
and Development Services
Department

Government agencies are under pressure to move the business of government online so they can better serve citizens, industry, and other agencies. This is no small feat given the number of paper-based processes in place today and government’s unique challenge of protecting privacy and providing access to all constituents, including citizens with disabilities. Forms are a focal point for agencies who must comply with government mandates for paper reduction such as the U.S. Government Paper Elimination Act (GPEA). Adobe Acrobat and Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) provide a powerful framework for a scalable eForms solution that is easy to use, thus enabling government agencies to start building e-government solutions today.

The Challenge

Government agencies are being driven to provide forms processing online as quickly as possible, but the task often seems overwhelming given the constraints of real legislation, constituent needs, and the realities of technology infrastructure. They must find a solution that can be implemented in phases as budget and infrastructure allow, is user-friendly, minimizes retraining, and will ensure interoperability with government databases within and across agencies. In addition, they need a solution that protects current technology investments by adhering to industry standards such as XML and utilizes existing forms. Government organizations must also consider their constituents when implementing an eForms solution by ensuring everyone receives the same information, whether they’re accessing the forms online or in print, and by finding a system that makes forms accessible to citizens with disabilities.

The Solution

Implementing a PDF-based eForms solution helps government agencies comply with government mandates such as the U.S. Government Paper Elimination Act (GPEA) and the Section 508. Government and commercial organizations worldwide have already embraced PDF, a publicly available file format specification and a standard for reliable delivery of documents and forms online.

It’s easy to see why—a PDF file looks exactly like the original form, with all the formatting, fonts, and images intact. This can reduce training costs associated with transitioning to an electronic solution because users are already familiar with the look and feel. It also ensures that everyone receives the same information online and in print. Furthermore, anyone can read and print PDF files across a broad range of hardware and software, including mobile devices.

A PDF-based solution offers many benefits over HTML and paper. Unlike HTML, PDF forms can be filled out offline; support graphically rich, high-precision layouts; allow password security; and provide a broad range of digital signature options, including a built-in signature tool. And unlike paper forms, PDF forms are intelligent. They automate calculations, support e-signatures and database connectivity, and interact with users as they make selections. Government agencies can also rest easy knowing they have made a lasting investment because PDF works with industry standards so the solution will be compatible with future technology.



Acrobat eForms

How Adobe Can Help

An eForms solution built around the Acrobat product family and Adobe PDF lets government agencies take a phased approach to moving paper-based processes online. It also enables them to address many constraints, including accessibility, adherence to industry standards, ability to handle complex forms, minimal retraining, interoperability with government databases, security, utilization of existing forms, and consistent information online and in print.

For instance, agencies can start with interactive Adobe PDF forms distributed via a network or the Web that users can view, fill in, and print. Next, they can provide online submissions by integrating eForms data with government databases. Then as budget and infrastructure allow, they can use Adobe Accelio™ solutions to launch a full-scale business process workflow that includes routing and approvals based on defined business rules and integrates with databases and enterprise applications.

Deploying Acrobat 5.0 or Acrobat Approval throughout a workgroup or agency also enables employees to sign and save forms directly from their desktop, further supporting a fully electronic workflow—so does the ability to approve forms with e-signatures. Agencies can use the built-in signature tool for internal approvals or expand the solution using industry-leading signature authentication and certification tools from vendors such as Entrust, VeriSign, and CIC.

Acrobat Capture® offers additional benefits to government agencies that are managing many forms. With Acrobat Capture, you can turn volumes of legacy forms into compact, accessible eForms.

The Results

Government agencies are processing forms with greater efficiency—saving time and money—by implementing Acrobat and Adobe PDF as part of a scalable eForms solution. Here are just a few examples of how Acrobat is improving form workflows.

California Department of General Services (DGS)

The DGS serves more than 40,000 public agencies statewide. They develop standard forms for public employees, handle production and printing of many state materials, and select vendors for projects. To speed forms processing and lower operating costs, the DGS replaced costly paper-based workflows with an automated system built around Acrobat software, Adobe PDF, and a third-party eForms management system.

Internal Revenue Service (IRS)

The IRS uses Acrobat and PDF extensively to help them both internal efficiencies and constituent communication. Standard letters, publications, and forms are made available to 100,000 agency employees, resulting in efficiencies that benefit the IRS and the public. Newly updated forms and letters can be posted online and made available instantly to staff anywhere, ensuring everyone is working with current materials and eliminating the delays—sometimes as long as two weeks—of shipping paper copies to remote staff. Furthermore, tax forms and instructional documents are available to the public on the IRS's Web site, which has reduced the IRS's per-transaction cost from \$3 to 0.1¢ and cut phone center inquiries by 6%.

Orange County Planning and Development Services Department (PDS)

The PDS populates building permit-related forms on-the-fly and signs them digitally with Acrobat, Java libraries, and CIC Sign-it for Acrobat with amazing results. Centrally stored Adobe PDF documents with attached digital signatures eliminate the need to distribute and file multiple copies of signed documents. School fee worksheets created as Adobe PDF files can be e-mailed to the school districts, saving valuable time. And the security options for Adobe PDF files protect sensitive documents.

For More Information

To learn more about Adobe's scalable eForms solutions, visit www.adobe.com/government.

Products

Adobe Acrobat 5.0

View, print, and create PDF files; collaborate effectively; build interactive electronic files; and more with the Acrobat flagship product.

Adobe Acrobat Approval

Sign and save forms with this client software for large-scale installations.

Acrobat Capture 3.0

Turn volumes of paper into digital knowledge with professional production software.

Acrobat Reader® 5.0

View and print PDF files.

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