



Sign of the Times
eSigning for All

Executive Summary

In 2018, electronic signatures have quickly become the new standard for growing organizations and the modern workforce. Widespread laws have made them almost ubiquitously acceptable and their digital nature reduces both risk and error while improving the efficiency and overall experience of everyone who uses them.

Yet even with such obvious benefits, IT teams still struggle to achieve “eSigning for All” due to common barriers, such as budget, legal misconceptions, and habit.

A **scalable eSignature tool** paired with a thoughtful approach to unique digital workflows can help IT teams overcome these challenges and bring their organization another step toward digital transformation.

Introduction

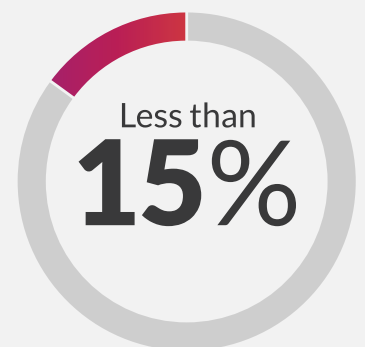
With the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act (UETA) in forty-seven states, the passage of Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act (ESIGN) at the federal level in 2000, and the Electronic Identification and Trust Services (eIDAS) in the EU since July 2016, electronic signatures have become a more desirable process for accomplishing daily workflows. So desirable, in fact, that **recent market research by MarketsandMarkets estimates that the market size will experience a 32% compound annual growth rate from 2016 to 2021.**

What's fueling this accelerated market growth? Some of the more obvious reasons are stronger legal confidence, greater personal mobility, and exponentially better efficiency. Less obvious, but just as important, are the dramatic improvements to both the customer and employee experience—anyone still using fax machines... anyone?

Yet as strong as the business case is for electronic signatures, our research shows that less than 15% of employees have access to eSignature tools. This discrepancy is because most enterprise organizations still reserve electronic signatures for specific processes, such as final contract execution, or specific roles, such as legal and finance.

Why? Traditional eSignature tools are expensive.

In this lightbook, we explore the organizational benefits of offering a scalable eSignature tool to 100% of the workforce, i.e. achieving "eSigning for All." We address the most common barriers that IT teams may encounter. Finally, we offer some simple suggestions for how you can achieve 100% digital document workflows and eliminate the analog process for good.



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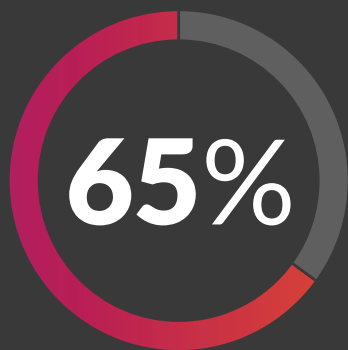
The Benefits of Electronic Signatures

While the benefits of eSigning for all are many, perhaps the simplest reason is reduced cost. **Sixty-five percent of signatures are still “wet” aka manual (AIIM, Nov 2016)**, and a full **51% of printing costs are just for signatures**. Consider how much your team could instantaneously save the enterprise by slicing your printing costs in half.

Not only do the cost savings come quickly when you stop printing, they also grow exponentially when you stop paying for paper, postage, and filing costs.

In addition to basic math, these are excellent reasons to consider going 100% digital with electronic signatures:

Reduce Risks: Aside from rare cases that have formal notarial requirements or specifically ban a digital process, the passing of UETA, ESIGN, and eIDAS make an electronic signature just as legally binding and admissible in court as a wet signature. Plus, with eSignature tools like Nitro, audit trails and electronic records improve regulatory compliance and process accountability.



of all signatures still take place with pen and paper.

Minimize Errors: Any time we can eliminate a manual step in nearly any process, we reduce the opportunity for human error. Electronic signatures are no different; accidentally skipped signature or initials sections can become a distant memory.

Improve Relationships: Simplifying the process to sign and execute documents by eSigning is a win all around—from customers to supply chain partners to every employee in between. Your organization becomes safer and easier to work with. Your processes become simple and streamlined. Your employees become more efficient and feel more productive. Win. Win. Win.

Speed Time to Revenue: Contract acceleration is a benefit that the sales team and the C-suite will pay close attention to. Thanks to eSignature tools, your teams can begin to exponentially reduce document return time.



The Most Common Barriers for IT Teams

For most IT organizations, the question is not “should we adopt eSignature technology?” As stated earlier, the benefits are fairly obvious. The more common question for IT is “what is holding us back?” In our experience, there are three common barriers holding IT back from a fully digital process:

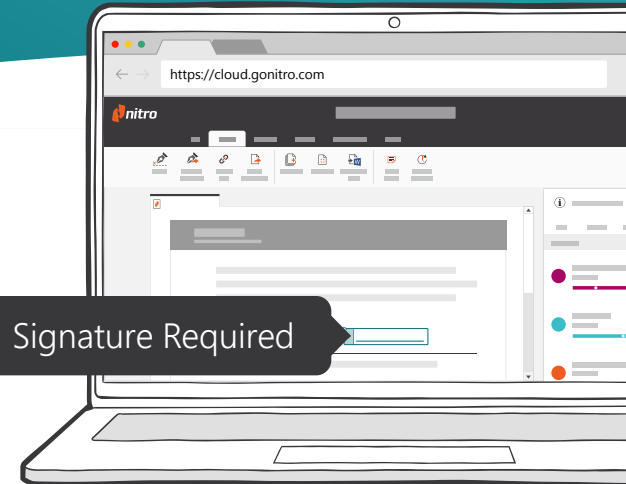
Overall Expense:

Just as cost savings is the most quantifiable benefit for democratizing electronic signatures, expense is likely the most common barrier to achieving this overall goal. Traditional tools, such as DocuSign, can cost up to \$480 per user per year. This price tag handcuffs IT into reserving those licenses for certain roles, such as legal and finance. As a result, the vast majority of the enterprise reverts to manual signatures or goes rogue by downloading unsupported tools.

While a robust solution may be required in certain cases for finance and legal teams, IT should consider that the vast majority of documents are executable with a lightweight (and less expensive) eSignature tool.

Lack of Education on Legality:

Even though state and federal laws for electronic signatures were passed 18 years ago, some lingering skepticism about their legality remains. Left unanswered, these questions can become a barrier to widespread adoption of eSignature tools.



The vast majority of signing needs can easily be fulfilled with a lightweight—and less expensive—eSignature tool.

The fact is that the vast majority of industries accept electronic signature, and there are very few use cases where electronic signatures are not acceptable or permissible in court. Some examples include:

- Adoption, divorce agreements
- Wills, codicils, and testamentary trusts
- Termination of health or life insurance benefits
- Court orders or notices, or official court documents
- Contracts or documents governed by the Uniform Commercial Code (“UCC”)
- Notices of default, foreclosure, or eviction regarding primary residence

Beyond use cases with explicit requirements like a formal notarial process or a handwritten signature, electronic signatures are binding and admissible in court. Both UETA and E-SIGN establish that electronic records and signatures have the same legal effect as traditional paper documents and handwritten signatures. What’s more, both laws clearly state that a document or signature cannot be denied legal effect or enforceability solely because it’s digital.

Habit:

The final barrier we see is simply habit—and some habits just die hard. Inevitably, IT teams will find themselves with “old-school” employees who revert to the learned behavior of printing just to sign. As workforce demographics change, this habit will resolve itself through a generation of workers who strive to keep their lives digital. In the meantime, the only way to overcome this barrier is by offering reluctant workers tools that are ridiculously easy to access and use.



How to Get Started

The best way to overcome these common barriers is a solid plan for getting started. By answering a few questions about how your organization can use electronic signatures, you'll naturally discover answers that address each of the common barriers discussed above.

Below are three simple steps your IT team can take to advance eSigning for all:

Evaluate Use Cases and Collect the Real Requirements for Unique Workflows:

If the barriers for your organization are expense and legal questions, your first step is to understand which use cases and workflows are complex, and which can simply replace a wet signature. User-friendly, scalable solutions like Nitro play really well with DocuSign, so rather than a cost-prohibitive, all-or-nothing approach, IT can keep DocuSign for users with complex workflows—but make the lightweight tool available for the other 99% of the workforce that just need to speed process and work digitally.

To gauge the complexity of a use case, survey end users with a simple set of questions. For example:

1. Does this workflow require a single signer or multiple signers?
2. Does this workflow include internal signatures, external signatures, or both?
3. Does this workflow require a formal notary or auditing process?
4. Is this workflow time-sensitive and could it benefit from more speed?
5. Does this workflow involve form-field data or simply need a signature for approval?

Align Potential Outcomes of eSignature Adoption with Key Business Goals

Nothing helps overcome pushback faster than a good “What’s In It for Me” statement. By taking the time to align the potential outcomes of eSignature adoption with specific goals, you can gain buy-in from key stakeholders. Here are some of the most common business goals we see IT teams highlighting in their pitch to go digital:

Improve Customer Support Experience

Eighty-eight percent of consumers expect to complete business digitally—which isn’t a shock considering smartphones are nearly ubiquitous worldwide. Eliminating paper and transitioning to electronic signatures improves the customer experience by accelerating transactions, avoiding the need to find a printer (or worse, a fax machine), allowing customers to be more agile, and preventing the possibility of lost documents.

Speed Contract Execution for Sales

If your enterprise organization has a sales team, you’d be hard-pressed to find one that isn’t focused on shortening the sales cycle or removing barriers to contract execution. eSignature workflows present an undeniable way to shave days off the sales cycle and deliver a simple, no-excuses-necessary contract execution.

Improve Employee Onboarding

Even the best onboarding experience can be tainted when the new employee has to stop and print a form just to enroll in benefits. Your HR team is working hard to deliver a seamless, modern onboarding experience. If you can show them how electronic signatures can simplify and improve the onboarding experience, you have the opportunity to gain instant buy-in.

General Productivity Across All Departments

Once you go eSigning, you never go back; from product development to operations, most employees already appreciate the efficiency of eSigning. Offering eSignature tools for all will expedite everyone's processes, increase visibility into document status, and help keep your organization's workflows on par with the modern world.

Clearly Establish Requirements Prior to Engaging Vendors

As with most technology that's been available for some time, there are multiple options to consider when selecting a partner. Remember the tools are not just about attaining a signature. More importantly, strategic eSignature solutions should support 100% digital workflows and integrate PDF productivity, given that it's the world's most common document format.

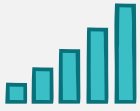
Before your team makes a short list of vendors, take the time to articulate your requirements by user group. Then, find out how each vendor can support each unique workflow.

“Nitro's solution is easy to use, and we're also working to identify more ways to streamline our document workflows. We've already seen a positive impact from implementing Nitro Cloud to facilitate everyday signature requests that can now be completed much faster—and without involving paper.”



Adam Grainger,
Director of IT and Projects at Baker Tilly

Examples of eSignature requirements by user group might include:



Sales: Consider workflows that support order processing, account setup, compensation plans, reseller agreements, and, of course, contracts.



Procurement: Consider workflows that support purchase orders, statements of work, master agreements, RFP sign-offs, and supplier compliance.



Marketing: Consider workflows that support event registrations, communication approvals, media insertion, brand compliance, asset approvals, and vendor agreements.



Human Resources: Consider workflows that support new-hire onboarding, contract acceptance, payroll, benefits and PTO, contractor documents, and exit materials.



IT: Consider workflows that support asset tracking, change requests, order fulfillment, access management, and change orders.

These are just a few examples. You'll be surprised by how much more efficient any workflow becomes when you remove the need to print, sign, and scan a signature page. In addition, the insight into process status will keep teams more proactive and productive.

Conclusion

End-to-end digital workflows are becoming the gold standard for business, and employees and customers will lose patience with analog processes quickly. As a result, organizations should be looking for ways to facilitate 100% digital document workflows while leveraging PDF and eSignature tools that eliminate slow, cumbersome, disconnected paper processes. Now is the time to vet integrated solutions that drive comprehensive document productivity for every user across the business—and consequently improve the work experience for everyone involved.