

Be SAFE – know who you are dealing with online

Understand what to look for when submitting personal information on PDF web forms



A brief background on document security

With increasing frequency government organisations, businesses and educational institutions are publishing and sharing information electronically. The obvious benefits of efficiency speed and flexibility need to be weighed against the ‘perception’ of security provided by the physical presence of paper. So that emerging electronic communication processes are more readily accepted by stakeholders, security must form an integral part of the solution. Whilst in the physical world, reproduction of unprotected paper based documentation requires some level of investment in equipment, unprotected documentation in electronic form can simply be duplicated, intercepted or modified through readily available software tools using simple ‘cut and paste’ techniques. On-line applications for credit and insurance are moving towards PDF forms. These new intelligent forms possess logic to allow inexperienced users to be guided through the data capture process, however, prior to entering any information into a form; the authenticity of the form must be assessed by the applicant. This is especially true where the following information is being requested:-

- **Financial information – credit card details, banking details**
- **Personal information – address, date of birth, full name, family details**
- **User account information – email address, username, passwords**

As with all PDF documents, (Annual Reports, Invoices, Laboratory reports, Diplomas,) PDF based forms have a built in ability to be digitally signed by the enterprise, thereby ensuring authenticity. The capability is known as CDS (Certified Document Services) and relies upon Digital Certificates which are issued by Certification Authorities such as GlobalSign & VeriSign.

As online fraud becomes more prevalent, we all want to make sure that we only send our information to the right web sites and ensure we enter sensitive information on to the right application forms, avoiding phishing web sites or fraudsters.

Certified Document Services

Certified Document Services (CDS) is one of the services enabled by the Adobe root certificate authority. CDS enables document authors to sign Portable Document Format (PDF) files, using standard digital certificates, which automatically validate when authors are using free Adobe® Reader® software. No additional client software or configuration is required.

CDS was designed to enable organizations and individuals who publish high-value documents to large and disparate recipient groups to increase the assurance level that the document's integrity and authenticity are preserved. By adding a CDS signature to a PDF file, document authors can increase this assurance level without requiring recipients to deploy additional software.

Which Versions of PDF reader support Certified Document Services?

The technology to recognise inherently trusted digital signatures incorporated into PDF documents first appeared with version 6.0 of the Adobe Acrobat Reader product. The blue security bar was introduced with version 8.1 of the product suite (including the free reader) to ensure a greater level of visual impact and therefore a higher level of trust and assurance than the previous versions.

For more details on being safe online with DocumentSign contact GlobalSign:

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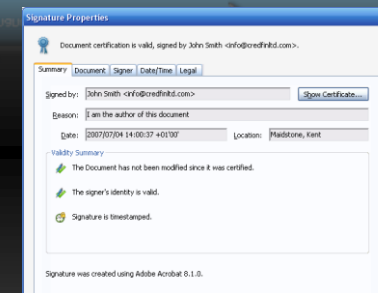
What to look for when trusting documents...

The New Blue Security Bar in Adobe PDF reader 8.1+

Look for the “blue security bar”– when the bar appears it means the document has been digitally signed. When the blue rosette appears, it means the company or individual who created the document has been authenticated.



Click the ‘Signature Properties’ icon and get the full details on who certified or signed the document, whether it has been modified in any way since the author created it and also view a secure time stamp highlighting exactly when it was created. This helps you verify that you are entering information or viewing information from a document which has been created by the company they claim to be.



What if you see a RED cross?

If the document has been tampered with in any way since it was certified by the author, the security bar will display a warning message and a very clear red cross.



Modified/Changed
Potential Issue!



Unknown Author
(Revoked, Expired or non trusted Digital ID)
Potential Issue!



Certified
Trusted

Remember! For the highest assurances of who created a document, look for the Blue Security Bar and Blue Rosette.

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