

**ADOBE SYSTEMS UK**  
**FUTURE OF eFORMS REPORT 2002**  
**A MORI REPORT ON THE USE OF INTERNAL eFORMS**

**GOVERNMENT SECTOR**



**MORI**



# CONTENTS

<b>FOREWORDS</b>	<b>3</b>
Michael Higgins, Adobe Systems UK	3
Andrew Pinder, Office of the e-Envoy	4
Jim Pang, Royal Mail ViaCode	5
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>eFORMS IN GOVERNMENT</b>	<b>8</b>
Conclusion	14
<b>GENERAL FINDINGS</b>	<b>15</b>
Familiarity with eForms	15
Extent of use	15
Current usage	15
Benefits of use	15
Future usage and timescale of uptake	15
<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>17</b>

## FOREWORD

**Michael Higgins, managing director, Adobe Systems UK,  
Benelux & CEEA**

To succeed in today's fast-moving world, public and private sector managers are on a crusade. Their goals are streamlined business processes, improved services, and efficient budget management.

Technology has had a huge impact on the workplace. However, for many people the simple process of completing routine but essential forms remains a paperchase. Nowhere is this more keenly felt than in financial, legal and government organisations.

Times are changing. The migration to electronic forms is accelerating. Businesses and governments around the world are discovering the benefits of eForms with the help of Adobe's Acrobat family of products and the Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) platform.

Adobe continues to increase its commitment to making eForms a reality across business. New product initiatives, new investments and new alliances are taking shape to provide a full range of eForms solutions to the enterprise as Adobe firmly establishes itself as a global leader in business process management.

The financial, legal and government sectors traditionally face the biggest challenge when it comes to transferring paper-based processes online. We commissioned this series of reports to track the progress of eForms in these markets in the UK. We hope you find the results valuable and thought-provoking.



## FOREWORD

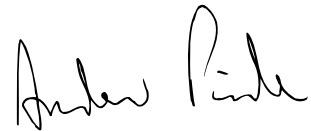
Andrew Pinder, Office of the e-Envoy

The Prime Minister has set the Office of the e-Envoy, and indeed the rest of Government, challenging targets for delivering government services electronically to citizens and businesses.

No less important is the need to transform the way the public sector works, streamlining processes, delivering more effective and efficient services, and providing a working environment for public servants that is fit for the 21st century.

Web technologies and eForms have great potential to enable this transformation.

It is good to see from this survey that government is making excellent progress in this area. There is still much to do to integrate electronic transactions into the machinery of government, and to establish trust in new systems to match or exceed what is already there, but working with companies such as Adobe, we are well on the way!



## FOREWORD

Jim Pang, managing director, Royal Mail ViaCode

One of the key justifications for the use of information technology within both public and private sector organisations is that it can save time and money.

It's always particularly pleasing therefore to see an independent study such as this one which supports our belief in the real paybacks to be gained from using technology wisely.

The survey was highly focused, analysing the use of eForms for standard, internal processes, such as the submission of timesheets. I am pleased to see that it shows that the UK's finance, legal and government sectors readily appreciate what a powerful tool they are harnessing in the adoption of eForms.

ViaCode's mission is to bring confidence and surety to all types of e-business through the supply of advanced digital security technology. We believe that the ability to authenticate and secure eForms, whether for internal or external use, is a key requirement and we're delighted to see that this report shows senior IT decision-makers share our view. It is clear that secured and signed eForms are set to become a prime enabler for the delivery of content across all three sectors.



## INTRODUCTION

As part of its 1999 UK online programme, the Government committed itself to achieving universal internet access and making all Government services available online by 2005. In its December 2001 Annual Report, the Office of the e-Envoy outlined the potential of the e-business revolution to enhance economic growth:

“Recent work by some UK economists suggests that new technologies have the potential to significantly increase the UK’s productivity and GDP growth rate... there is now a deeper, and more realistic, understanding of the change with which we are dealing”  
UK online Annual Report, December 2001

This is the first inquiry into the use of internal electronic forms (eForms) in the UK’s government, financial and legal sectors. Conducted by MORI on behalf of Adobe Systems it reveals that IT decision makers show high levels of awareness of technology such as eForms.

Whilst the media has focused on the importance of electronic service delivery (ESD) to the public, radical changes to internal and inter-departmental processes have the potential to deliver the most dramatic cost savings and performance enhancements:

Web-based technologies are not just important for external communications and interactions. In the form of ‘intranets’ they also can ... allow costs to be cut and efficiency improved. Key applications include human relations, cutting administrative costs, providing a front-end for databases, and providing internal access to the organisation’s Web sites.

‘Government on the web’, report by the National Audit Office, 1999

## INTRODUCTION

All three sectors are feeling the pressure from central Government, customers and employees to make more extensive use of electronic forms to facilitate online processes. As the infrastructure and skills required to support the technology develops, eForms will become an essential part of everyday administrative processes:

*“Estimates are that about 83% of all business documents consist of forms. In the US, businesses spend about \$1bn a year designing and printing forms. However, they spend \$25-35bn a year filing, storing and retrieving those paper forms and an extra \$65-85bn over the entire life-cycle of those documents maintaining, updating and distributing them”*

Sellen, A. J. and Harper, R. H. R., “The myth of the paperless office”, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2002

Across the government, finance and legal sectors, there is overwhelming enthusiasm for eForms and a real appreciation of the potential benefits. Nearly half of those interviewed in government organisations have implemented a fully automated processing system (Please refer to ‘How are eForms used?’ section). However, paper and email remain important elements of each form’s life-cycle, despite the fact that most respondents acknowledged the time, paper and storage saving benefits of full automation.

By talking to IT decision-makers, we have ensured that our assessment of eForms usage is set in the context of the organisations’ wider IT strategy. Full methodological details are included in the Appendix.

## eFORMS IN GOVERNMENT

More than half of central and local government IT decision-makers interviewed stated that they were planning to implement an eForms solution in the future, compared with one-third in the financial and legal sectors. The sheer scale of government departments means that the efficiency gains associated with the adoption of eForms for this sector is huge. This was confirmed by our findings, which showed that:

*“Government targets say we should do electronic business by 2005. We are modifying all our systems to meet that target - including our forms”*

P. West, South Hams District Council

eForm implementation has been an integral part of government strategy since 1998 when targets were introduced by the e-Envoy as part of its UK online initiative. The subsequent Modernising Government white paper, issued in 1999, set 2005 as the principal target for making all government

services available online. Additional reports by the Performance and Innovation Unit<sup>1</sup> have refined the government's approach to electronic service delivery. Within central government departments and local authorities, senior officials have now been given responsibility for co-ordinating 'e-business plans', setting out their approach to meeting the 2005 target.

The December 2001 UK online Annual Report demonstrated that significant progress had been made towards achieving these targets. The zeal with which these plans have been progressed reflects the importance of the two key elements of e-government, performance enhancement and cost savings. Electronic forms offer the scope to deliver both.

Within government, the potential for eForms is vast, particularly in terms of standardising processes across departments, thus providing major cost savings.

## eFORMS IN GOVERNMENT

Procurement systems perhaps offer the most measurable savings. An electronic procurement scheme run by the Office for Government Commerce reported savings of £31m on transactions worth £159m.

Further initiatives are being developed in a number of local authorities. Significant funding has been provided as part of the Government's Pathfinder scheme to finance local authority projects designed to expand the remit of electronic government. In addition to these pilot schemes, the Government pledged a further £325m to help local authorities comply with the 2005 deadline:

"The draft Freedom of Information Bill, plus a general shift towards storing documents and running filing systems electronically could ... [enable] the research councils to build up valuable databases of scientific information in PDF or other electronic form"

'Government on the Web', report by the National Audit Office, 1999

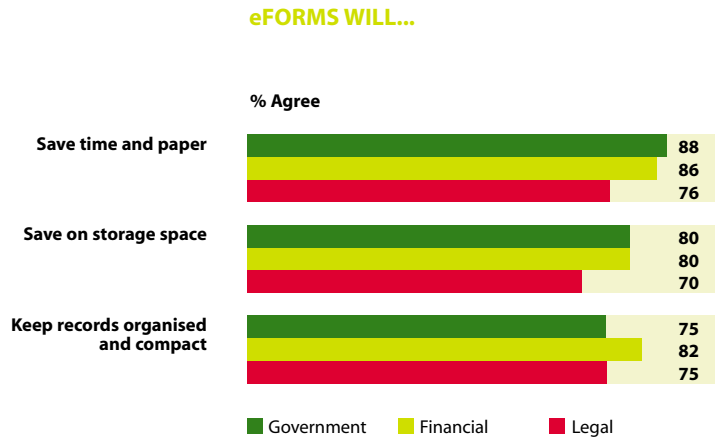
### THE BENEFITS OF eFORMS

Central government is clearly a convert to the internal efficiency gains that electronic service delivery can offer, as evidenced by the raft of initiatives and targets which are driving change throughout the sector. The key benefits of internal eForms cited by government IT representatives surveyed were saving time, paper and storage space. Additionally, three-quarters believe eForms will significantly improve workflow efficiency; two-thirds say they will cut costs.

"We adopted eForms to cut down on paperwork, and speed up the processing of forms such as purchase orders and holiday leave forms. The problem with paper forms was that there were multiple copies - nobody was using the same form. There's quite a big push in Northern Ireland to get the public to complete forms online, as part of the general UK online targets for 2005"

Colin Raynee, InterTrade Ireland

## eFORMS IN GOVERNMENT



### WHICH FORMS ARE eFORMS?

Approximately four in ten government organisations are already using eForms, which is on a par with both the legal and financial sectors. 70% of the government departments that use eForms confirmed that less than half of the total number of forms they generate were available in electronic format (eForm).

Timesheets and internal questionnaires were the most commonly deployed eForms amongst government organisations. Up to 50% of training requests, expense claims and holiday leave requests were also available in electronic format.

## eFORMS IN GOVERNMENT

**Q.** Which generic types of internal forms is your organisation currently delivering via eForms to internal employees for them to fill out?



### HOW ARE eFORMS USED?

The present implementation of eForms in many organisations is a mixture of computer and paper-based processes. Many organisations employ a range of different solutions. This report identified four types of eForm, classified according to how they are processed:

**Paper** The most basic eForms – printed off, filled-out manually and sent via traditional mail or internal post

**Hybrid** Filled-out electronically, printed off and then sent using traditional mail or internal post

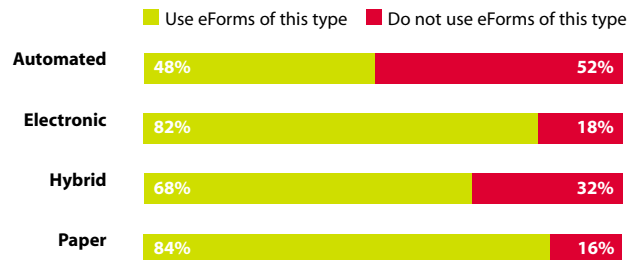
**Electronic** Completed and sent via email as an attachment

**Automated** The most sophisticated eForm – filled out electronically and submitted automatically to a central processing database

## eFORMS IN GOVERNMENT

Government organisations are the biggest implementers of the most sophisticated, or 'Automated', eForm processing system. Approximately half of the IT decision-makers in this sector reported using eForms in this way, with four in five saying they used eForms sent as email attachments.

**Q.** Which of these types of eForms is your organisation currently using for its internal documents?



"As a Housing Association, we operate across a lot of remote sites, with wardens and tenants all completing forms. Previously, things were printed out, completed and sent back to us, but we used to run out of paper forms, had photocopier breakdowns and overall, it was expensive. I'd prefer to avoid printing things altogether.

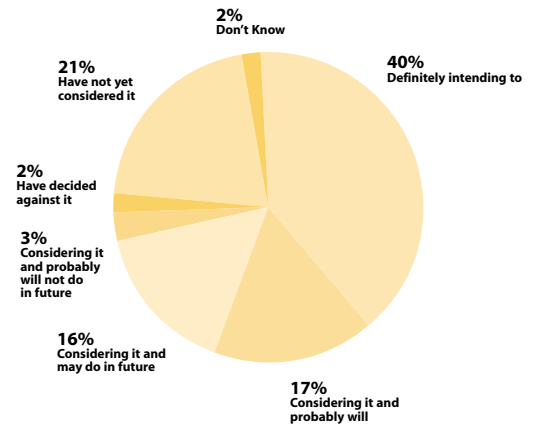
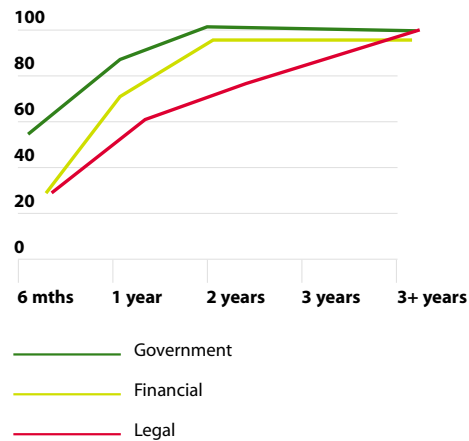
We adopted PDF-based eForms because of their security - while Word-based forms can be changed, PDFs are standardised. We wanted to make sure the forms we used were compatible with all operating systems and formats, so everybody could read them. Above all, PDFs are less labour-intensive for me"

Catherine Lewis, Servite Housing Association

# eFORMS IN GOVERNMENT

## eFORM IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

It could be argued that the Government's commitment to creating a fully-automated eForm system is one of the reasons why implementation is slower in this sector than across legal and finance. One in five government organisations expect eForm rollout to take more than two years.



**Base** All those whose organisation is not currently using eForms but definitely or probably will do so and who have an idea of the timescale of implementation. Government (33), Financial (17), Legal (10) \*Caution small base sizes

**Base** All Government organisations not using eForms (58)

# eFORMS IN GOVERNMENT

## CONCLUSION

The benefits of eForms are widely-recognised across a range of internal administrative processes: streamlining, cost reduction and improved efficiency. In response to central government targets and initiatives, government organisations are using more sophisticated and automated solutions than those firms surveyed in the legal or financial sectors.

As the 2005 target for electronic delivery of government services draws nearer, the future for eForms in government is assured. Despite this deadline, the Government is progressing slower than the financial and legal sectors in implementing a complete, internal eForms service.

## GENERAL FINDINGS

### FAMILIARITY WITH eFORMS

Across the financial, legal and government sectors, approximately nine in ten IT (87%) decision-makers indicated they were extremely or quite familiar with the concept of eForms.

### EXTENT OF USE

The number of organisations currently employing eForms is approximately four in ten across all three industry sectors.

Approximately 75% of respondents use **'Paper'**, **'Hybrid'** or **'Electronic'** processed eForms, with 40% deploying **'Automated'** eForms. Many organisations employ a range of these solutions for different internal processes.

### BENEFITS OF USE

The majority of respondents (83%) acknowledged time and paper saving as the main benefit of eForms. Keeping records organised and compact (78%) and saving storage

space (77%) were the other two most common benefits. 59% of respondents indicated reduced business costs and 56% improved data accuracy as benefits.

### CURRENT USAGE

Seven in ten users say eForms account for 50% or less of the forms filled out by employees for internal purposes.

### FUTURE USAGE AND TIMESCALE OF UPTAKE

Amongst those not currently using eForms, 57% were considering implementing an eForms solution, and 38% stated that they 'definitely' or 'probably' would. Only one in ten rejected the idea outright. Of those organisations planning to adopt eForms in future, nearly two-thirds, across all sectors, predict they would be implemented within a year, with over a third expecting them to be in place within six months. eForms are clearly a key strategy for companies across all three sectors.

## SUMMARY

Awareness of eForms is high amongst non-users and current users. The installed base of eForms users is approximately four in ten for organisations in each sector, and implementation is on the agenda for many more.

Popular processes already covered by an eForms solution are simple administration procedures – expense claims, timesheets, holiday leave requests and training requests. Some consisted of a fairly basic process of printing off a form and completing it manually, although more sophisticated PDF-based solutions are also widely used.

The qualitative evidence from respondents is that those who have made the switch to eForms did so chiefly for reasons of convenience and economy.

# APPENDICES

## **METHODOLOGY**

306 interviews were conducted by telephone with IT decision-makers, responsible for purchasing IT systems and software. Of this total there were:

**100 respondents from companies in the finance sector**

**102 respondents from organisations in the Government sector (both Central and Local Government)**

**104 respondents from companies in the legal sector**

All companies had a minimum of 20 employees. Interviews were conducted by telephone using CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) by MORI Telephone Surveys Limited between 6 - 20 November 2001.

Inevitably, in a survey of this nature, when comparing the results of specific sub-groups within each sector, some of the resulting sample sizes are small and the results should be treated with caution. Where sample size is an issue, attention has been drawn to this in the relevant part of this report. Where aggregated data has been used, these are based on equal importance assigned to each sector.

## USEFUL WEB SITES

### Adobe eForms

[www.adobe.co.uk/eforms](http://www.adobe.co.uk/eforms)

### Adobe Future of eForms report

[www.adobe.co.uk/futureofeforms](http://www.adobe.co.uk/futureofeforms)

### Adobe eGovernment Solutions

[www.adobe.co.uk/government](http://www.adobe.co.uk/government)

### Accessibility

<http://access.adobe.com/>

### Adobe Acrobat Accessibility

[www.adobe.co.uk/solutionsacc](http://www.adobe.co.uk/solutionsacc)

### Adobe Finance Solutions

[www.adobe.co.uk/finance](http://www.adobe.co.uk/finance)

### Adobe Legal Solutions

[www.adobe.co.uk/legalsolutions](http://www.adobe.co.uk/legalsolutions)

### Adobe Worldwide Customer Spotlights

[www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/customerstories.html](http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/customerstories.html)

### Adobe UK Customer Spotlights

[www.adobe.co.uk/products/acrobat/customerstories.html](http://www.adobe.co.uk/products/acrobat/customerstories.html)

### Adobe Acrobat 5.0

[www.adobe.co.uk/products/acrobat/main.html](http://www.adobe.co.uk/products/acrobat/main.html)

### Adobe Acrobat Family of Products

[www.adobe.co.uk/acrofamily](http://www.adobe.co.uk/acrofamily)

### Royal Mail ViaCode

[www.royalmail.com/at\\_home/net\\_security/default.htm](http://www.royalmail.com/at_home/net_security/default.htm)

### UK Online Annual Report

[www.e-envoy.gov.uk/ukonline/progress/anrep2001/default.htm](http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/ukonline/progress/anrep2001/default.htm)

### UK Online for Business

[www.ukonlineforbusiness.gov.uk/gateway/home/index.jsp](http://www.ukonlineforbusiness.gov.uk/gateway/home/index.jsp)

### Judicial Working Group

[www.courtservice.gov.uk/info/rep/judicialworkinggroup/reportjwg.pdf](http://www.courtservice.gov.uk/info/rep/judicialworkinggroup/reportjwg.pdf)

## CONTRIBUTORS

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Andrew Pinder, Office of the e-Envoy  
Jim Pang, Royal Mail ViaCode



[www.adobe.co.uk/futureofeforms](http://www.adobe.co.uk/futureofeforms)

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