

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

LEGAL SECTOR



MORI



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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

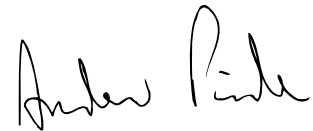
Andrew Pinder, Office of the e-Envoy

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

Recent landmark reforms, including the legal recognition of digital signatures, have encouraged uptake of electronic forms which can offer relief to the UK's overburdened legal system.

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

Across the legal, government and finance sectors, there is overwhelming enthusiasm for eForms and a real appreciation of the potential benefits. More than two in five legal firms currently have eForms in place. Nearly a quarter of those interviewed have implemented a fully 'Automated' eForm processing system (see page 12). 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.

"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

Reforms in the legal sector are centred on reducing the amount of paper involved in legal proceedings. The Electronic Communications Act (2000) changed the rules of evidence to make digital signatures admissible in court, and since July 2001, the EU has required all member states to recognise digital authentication.

INTRODUCTION

The legal sector is not exempt from Government targets to enable services to be delivered electronically by 2005. In February 2002, the Courts Service launched 'Money Claim Online', a web-based scheme designed to relieve some of the small-claims pressure from the legal system by diverting plaintiffs towards electronic forms.

The drive towards building electronic case management systems to handle the ever-increasing load on the justice system continues apace:

"There is a pressing need for common computerised information systems to be introduced across all Civil and Family Courts ... it is essential that information can be exchanged electronically across the whole justice system"

Lord Chief Justice Brooke: The Judicial Working Group Annual Report, 2001

Legal firms are beginning to realise that the infrastructure which supports electronic case management can be turned to administrative functions such as expense claims, timesheets and holiday leave requests. It has been identified that this is where some of the most significant efficiency gains can be achieved.

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 THE LEGAL SECTOR

The legal sector is steeped in tradition. The legal process creates a mass of case-related paperwork that must be categorised and stored. Each case generates a new file, including copies of all correspondence, client instructions and other documentation. Long legal proceedings can generate literally thousands of pages of evidence which presents storage problems for all practices. Information also needs to be archived, stored then retrieved again quickly. eForms can clearly help to minimise these problems.

"The legal sector loves paper. eForms mean we don't have to keep lots of copies, or throw out old forms"

Richard Stone, Norton Peskett (Ltd)

Given the reliance of the legal sector on the written word as evidence, the adoption of eForms may be considered ahead of its time. Until recently solicitors were required to have things in hard copy format - how could it be proved that

the task was completed unless it was in writing? It is critical that all documents remain faithful to the original and are not tampered with in any way. This is just as pertinent for electronic case files and newly admissible digitally-signed documents, as their hard-copy predecessors.

However, a lawyer's most valuable resource is time, and time freed up from administration can be more profitably spent on chargeable work.

"eForms means that people don't have to spend time looking for things, or finding paper copies of forms. In an industry where staff are charged by the minute, you want to free up as much time as possible"

High-street solicitors practice

"In our firm we have been warned that if we put one more filing cabinet on our floor, the ceiling will collapse"

High-street solicitors practice

eFORMS IN THE LEGAL SECTOR

Solicitors are required to obtain a requisite number of Common Professional Development (CPD) points every year as a condition of their licence renewal. eForms can streamline training requests and the recording of CPD points for individual solicitors, freeing up time that can be spent on chargeable work.

Furthermore, in publicly funded firms specialising in legal aid work there are restrictions on the hourly rate charged. This places an even greater emphasis on working as efficiently as possible. In addition, these firms face annual audits at which it is possible for franchises to be lost. Publicly funded firms are also required to send details of each file, and the amount to be billed, to the Legal Services Commission to ensure payment on 'advice only' work. For these reasons, it is crucial that records are stored effectively.

THE BENEFITS OF eFORMS

IT decision-makers in legal companies are generally less aware of the benefits of eForms than their counterparts in the finance and government sectors.

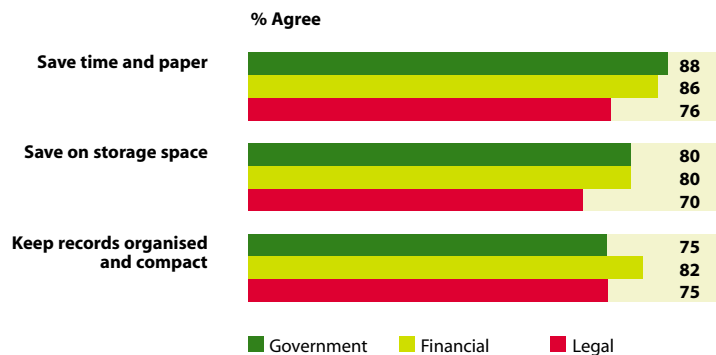
However, three-quarters of IT decision-makers in the legal sector believe that eForms will save time and paper and a similar proportion further acknowledge that it will help in the organisation of records.

"The main factor was standardisation - legal documents are standard, and eForms enable us to update our forms regularly. The law changes so quickly that even a minor change can have a huge bearing"

Neil Monro, Miller Sands Solicitors

eFORMS IN THE LEGAL SECTOR

eFORMS WILL...

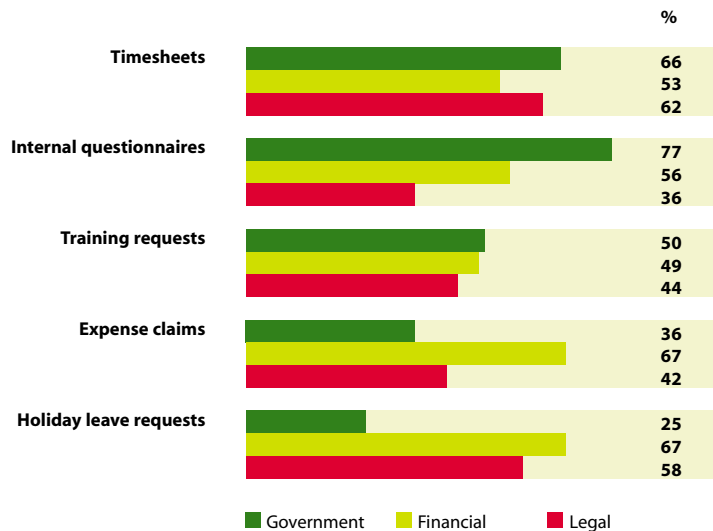


WHICH FORMS ARE eFORMS?

Two-in-five legal organisations have implemented eForms, which is on a par with both the government and finance sectors. eForms are most commonly used for timesheets, holiday leave requests, training requests and expense claims. Half of the IT decision-makers in legal companies recognise that eForms would reduce errors in data entry.

eFORMS IN THE LEGAL SECTOR

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 blend 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

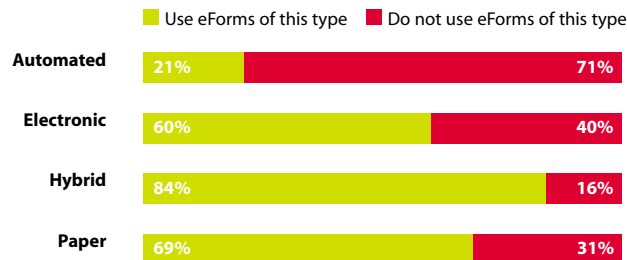
eFORMS IN THE LEGAL SECTOR

Many of the legal firms interviewed that currently use eForms, process these forms in a variety of ways. Less than a third use 'Automated' forms and three-fifths send forms as email attachments. While eForms are clearly being used by the legal sector, it would seem that a lack of technology infrastructure, particularly widespread internet access, is restricting the sophistication of the process used.

"Our corporate intranet already supported HTML, so it was a natural way to progress. We are also using PDFs for incoming information particularly from the court service"

Solicitors practice

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

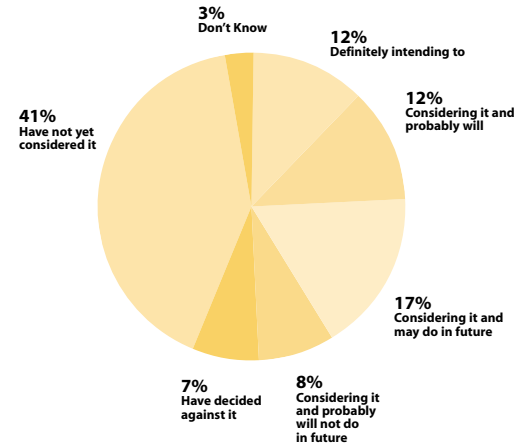
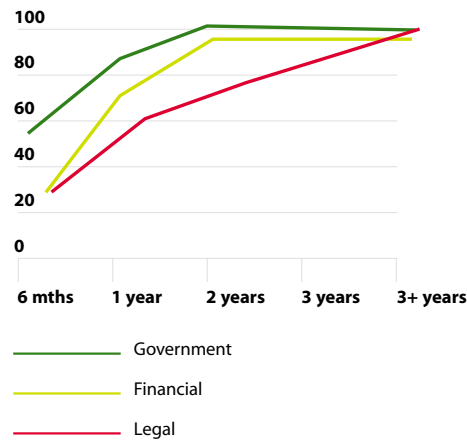


Base All legal organisations using eForms (45), Nov 2001

eFORMS IN THE LEGAL SECTOR

eFORM IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

Current non-users of eForms in the legal sector are lagging behind those in government and finance when it comes to planned systems implementation. Only 24% plan on implementing eForms in their firms within a two-year time frame, with one-fifth implementing a system within the next six months. One-in-four have not yet considered eForms. These organisations are largely smaller firms, which could perceive the cost of implementation to be a drawback.



eFORMS IN THE LEGAL SECTOR

CONCLUSION

Legal firms are gradually realising the benefits of eForms across a range of administrative processes, notably the savings in time, paper, storage and the ability to keep records well organised. Improved document security and retrieval are also important. Some legal firms are deploying sophisticated PDF-based solutions internally and externally, especially for administrative applications in which document integrity is vital.

Legally speaking, the future for eForms has been assured. Increasing numbers of firms are seeking to streamline their internal administration and build systems to support electronic case documents.

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

Adobe Future of eForms report

www.adobe.co.uk/futureofeforms

Adobe eGovernment Solutions

www.adobe.co.uk/government

Accessibility

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

Adobe Acrobat Accessibility

www.adobe.co.uk/solutionsacc

Adobe Finance Solutions

www.adobe.co.uk/finance

Adobe Legal Solutions

www.adobe.co.uk/legalsolutions

Adobe Worldwide Customer Spotlights

www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/customerstories.html

Adobe UK Customer Spotlights

www.adobe.co.uk/products/acrobat/customerstories.html

Adobe Acrobat 5.0

www.adobe.co.uk/products/acrobat/main.html

Adobe Acrobat Family of Products

www.adobe.co.uk/acrofamily

Royal Mail ViaCode

www.royalmail.com/at_home/net_security/default.htm

UK Online Annual Report

www.e-envoy.gov.uk/ukonline/progress/anrep2001/default.htm

UK Online for Business

www.ukonlineforbusiness.gov.uk/gateway/home/index.jsp

Judicial Working Group

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

**For additional copies of the Future
of eForms report, or for any sector
specific sales enquiries, contact
Adobe Systems UK at:**

**Adobe Finance: uk-finance@adobe.com
Adobe Government: uk-gov@adobe.com
Adobe Legal: uk-legal@adobe.com**

Telephone: 020 8606 4000

**Adobe Systems Europe Ltd
Waterview House
1 Roundwood Avenue
Stockley Park
Uxbridge
Middlesex
UB11 1AY**

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