

DRAFTING GOES DIGITAL

A Drafter's Perspective



We met with a drafter who works for an international engineering and construction firm and uses ConsignO Desktop at work. When she started working with the firm, it was going through a complete digital transformation and was just beginning to use ConsignO Desktop to prepare and sign their electronic documents. During the interview, she described how she experienced the implementation of ConsignO Desktop in her work environment and how it rapidly became a daily essential tool.

How long have you been using ConsignO Desktop?

I have been using it on a regular basis for approximately three years.

"Prior to using ConsignO Desktop, the handling of documents was a loss of a day's work."

Prior to using ConsignO Desktop to create original documents, what process were you using and what part of it was the most time consuming?

We had to print the original plans, have them signed, and then scan them one by one. And, using large format scanners can be complicated because we must make sure that the documents are precisely positioned, etc.

Once the documents were in PDF format, they had to be converted to PDF/A before they could be sent. Furthermore, engineers are extremely busy, so it wasn't always easy to find time when we were both available, and that would increase the length of the process even more. Therefore, prior to using ConsignO Desktop, the handling of documents when sending original copies was a loss of a day's work.

How long would it take to produce a series of certified plans for a project?

In paper format, sometimes up to an entire day! But with the digital seal, for the same number of plans, between 20 and 30 minutes. We're saving an incredible amount of time!



What aspects of the document creation presented more difficulties (duration of the process, scanning, document delivery, image quality)?

The process had numerous wait times, steps and verifications at the end of each step. Sometimes, there were printing mistakes: the plans were not printed correctly, they had run out of ink, or the seal had not been applied properly and

when reprinted, the ink had smudged. Just a small mistake meant that we had to start over, reprint and recheck. It was a great loss of time and money because paper is very expensive, especially AO. Using ConsignO Desktop can prevent many careless errors. Think of what that entails on a 200-drawing project!

Both our printer and printing service are in the basement, therefore even if the employee was responsible in delivering our documents in a timely manner, whenever he was too busy, I wouldn't get them right away. The process could sometimes take up to two hours.

Time management was necessary. Once the printing was launched, I had to work on something else and manage various projects. Some people preferred to stay by the printer, setting aside the plans that were misprints but while standing there, you're not working, you're checking your plans.

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How was the deployment of ConsignO Desktop with your company? How was the digital turn?

Management realized that using the software would save time as well as have a great impact on the productivity of most employees: engineers, drafters and technicians. It was obviously in their best interest. So, they decided to make the digital transition and have ConsignO Desktop installed on all workstations.

The software is very useful for an engineer. For instance, if he is caught up in meetings all day and needs to sign a dozen project plans, he no longer needs to stop everything to affix his ink seal. ConsignO Desktop allows him to do it directly from his laptop even during an ongoing meeting.



What is ConsignO Desktop greatest benefit in the creation of documents?

Without any doubt, time savings! And the employees enhance their productivity. I can now prepare 15 small projects in one day instead of 15 days. Also, the verification process is much faster. As soon as the engineer confirms his signature, I make sure that all seals display properly on PDF and email the document. The project is completed, and I can move on to something else.

Is it easy to learn how to use ConsignO Desktop?

Absolutely, ConsignO Desktop is a user-friendly software, very simple and easy to understand. The right-click features make my life so much easier!

When I joined the company, I was told the width and length that the business seals had to have, as well as briefly shown

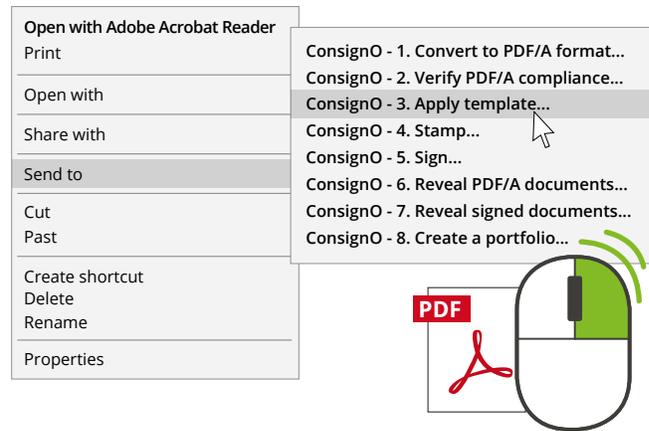
how to proceed to set them. Now that the templates are set, there is no need to return to the settings.

The more I use the software, the more I discover useful options and functionalities such as being able to merge PDFs. I don't believe any other free software provides that option. Some will create PDF files, but not merge PDFs. For us, that is a very useful option. We often use it to merge many files in one unique PDF, including non-final plans because with ConsignO Desktop, even if the plans are not finalized we can still merge them. Therefore, I can take 30 plans, merge them in one PDF and email it to the engineer for him to review and tell me if modifications are required.

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What functionalities do you use most often?

The right-click functionalities on the mouse, that can also be used without even opening the application. With the template that I created, I simply select the PDF file that needs to be prepared and proceed with a right-click: I convert the file into the PDF/A format, verify it and then select "Apply template." The signature zones are automatically positioned at the same place as on my other plans, and I just need to send the document to obtain signatures. Everything is ready.



How much time and money do you think you save for every document using ConsignO Desktop compared to the 'printing-signing-scanning' method?

I remember a project for which we had to print 150 original drawings in colour on A0 paper, the largest format of paper and the most expensive. The printing costs amounted to over \$1000. It made absolutely no sense. So, we had agreed with the client to only send the PDF files in colour. The costs of printing can be astronomical, and are often not taken into consideration by the clients. During service proposals, given that the price of paper is extremely high, we try to avoid any requests for paper copies especially now that we can obtain original documents electronically!

More and more clients are comfortable with electronic documents. Paper is cumbersome and requires a lot of storage space. Let's just think of all the archiving process for signed plans. It is complicated and time consuming. Archiving electronic copies is much easier, it all goes in the same file.

Not only is archiving paper files cumbersome and can require a lot of storage space, but manually signed copies that are scanned can become extremely large PDF documents. Opening a scanned A0 document can take forever because it's not just a photocopy: the document, including the ink seal, must be scanned in colour to be in conformity

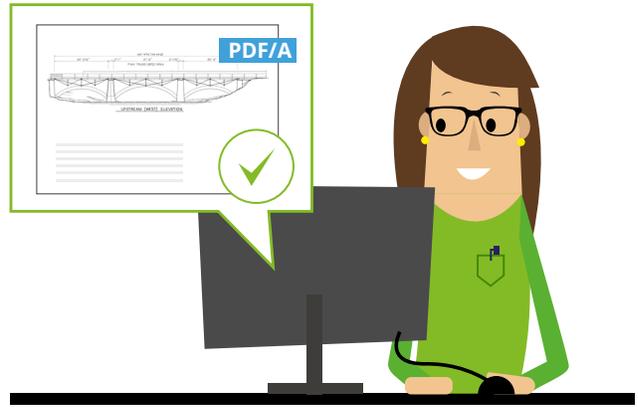
with the original document. And even with our powerful computers, it can sometimes take three to four minutes to open these documents. Imagine the engineer who is using a laptop. If it takes him 10 minutes to open the PDF, it will drive him crazy!

However, the original PDF file, even signed, is much smaller. Whether in terms of time, archiving or costs, there are only benefits!

Are there still clients who ask for original documents in paper format?

Not really, mainly copies. We send the original PDF documents to the client, but they can request paper copies. If they do so, we send them three or four copies. I send the documents to print, and the clients have the originals on PDF.

"Whether in terms of time, archiving or costs, there are only benefits!"



What would happen if you couldn't use ConsignO Desktop's software anymore and had to go back to paper?

I would have a fit! (Chuckles.) That would mean that we don't appreciate technology. Like I said, we are saving so much time and are so much more productive.

Using paper every step of the way, from the engineer to the drafter, is not the most productive way to do things. It should be a last resort solution. Everything is so much easier with the digital seal!



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