



3 WAYS TO IMPROVE DOCUMENT PRODUCTIVITY



A REPORT ON THE DOCUMENT
HABITS OF A MODERN WORKFORCE

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Nitro partnered with the PDF Association to survey 1,200+ knowledge workers about their document usage habits.

Documents have always played a fundamental role in daily business activities—think contracts, employee paperwork, invoices, etc.—and since the emergence of the PDF in the early 90's, paper documents have increasingly been replaced by digital documents.

More recently, the introduction of the cloud and significant innovation from the likes of Dropbox, Google Docs, Microsoft OneDrive and others have made it easier for knowledge workers to share and collaborate on digital documents, and therefore work more productively overall.

However, most businesses aren't effectively leveraging these tools, and by continuing to rely on outdated habits like printing and scanning,

will inevitably see a detrimental gap between actual employee productivity levels and potential optimal output.

Seeking to uncover the hidden costs and time wasters that still hamper productivity in the workplace, **Nitro partnered with the PDF Association**, a global organization that delivers vital information about implementing PDF technology, to conduct a survey of 1,200+ knowledge workers about the ways they use documents on a daily basis at work.

The survey was developed around the hypothesis that only businesses actively working to eliminate paper-based productivity killers and modernize sharing and collaboration habits can begin to operate near peak efficiency.

THE SURVEY PRODUCED THREE KEY OBSERVATIONS:

1 SPEED UP SIGNING

The majority of workers still execute wet ink signatures by hand, and use scanners, printers or copiers several times every day.

2 COLLABORATE SMARTER

Collaboration plays a key role in most organizations, with multiple people working together on the same documents and sharing feedback via email or even on paper.

3 MODERNIZE SHARING & STORAGE

Employees habitually save documents to their desktop and/or company server for storage, and default to sharing them via email.

WHO TOOK THIS SURVEY?

✓ 1,200+ KNOWLEDGE WORKERS

Located in 54 countries

✓ 13 INDUSTRIES

Education, Finance, Government, Healthcare, Insurance, Legal, Engineering, Marketing, Non-profit, Sales, Technology, Utilities, Business Services

✓ ACROSS 10+ PROFESSIONS

Administrators, Computer Scientists, Educators, Engineers, Executives, Financial Services Providers, Healthcare Providers, Lawyers & Paralegals, Marketers, Salespeople

✓ SMALL TO LARGE BUSINESSES

Companies with 1 to 10,000+ employees



DIGITAL DOCUMENTS ARE THE BASIS OF BUSINESS:

Respondents use PDFs an average of 7 times each day. This frequent usage leads to common challenges.

TOP 3 DOCUMENT CHALLENGES



Which are made worse by our bad document habits:

27% print PDFs to review

58% are still signing documents by hand

43% send 6+ documents via email each day



THE MOST FREQUENT ACTIONS

Reading
 Printing
 Sharing
 Filling Forms
 Editing

1

SPEED UP SIGNING

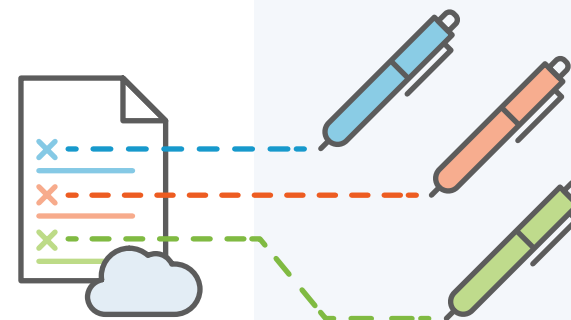
58% choose to hand-sign documents that are emailed to them.

Aside from editing, the biggest document challenge workers face is getting signatures from the right parties in a timely manner. However, only 42% opt for the convenience of electronic signatures versus signing by hand.

This means that the majority of respondents are printing documents on paper to sign with ink, and then likely scanning and emailing the signed documents. That workflow—which would include walking to retrieve the printed document, applying a signature, scanning the printout back into digital format, and passing it along via email—is clearly more time-consuming than the few clicks it would take to e-sign and return the document. And while a recent Forrester report proves that e-signing is certainly gaining traction¹, more than half of respondents continue to default to the print-sign-scan workflow.

This continuing reliance on paper signing is problematic, especially since, according to an IDC study, workers say they spend over 3.5 hours per week just approving and signing documents.²

Compared with the resource-intensive hand-signing process, the implementation of e-signatures can reduce document turnaround times by up to 80% and save organizations up to \$20 per document. **One company's measurable customer loyalty was even cited to have increased 5x after implementing an e-signature solution.**⁶

**WHY YOU SHOULD E-SIGN****1. TIME BETTER SPENT**

No wasted time chasing down signers, and real-time status updates eliminate the waiting game.

2. IMMEDIATE ROI

Save real dollars on paper, printer ink, and your employees' time.

3. CUSTOMER DELIGHT

Enabling your customers to review and sign instantaneously and from any device makes it easy to do business with you, and delivers a great experience.

After switching to e-signatures for their sales contracts, Nitro customer KISSmetrics said they are seeing signed deals returned 10x faster than with their old process, which relied on traditional wet-ink signatures.

2

COLLABORATE SMARTER

83% lose time each day due to document collaboration issues.⁴



Working on documents with multiple people can be a frustrating, time-consuming process laden with inefficiencies.

For example, 27% of our survey respondents said they print PDF documents in order to review them—but **an incredible 63% of that group said they then scan those printouts back into digital form and email them to their collaborators**, wasting both time and resources.

And, with 92% of people conducting document collaboration and review via email⁴, the door is left wide open for issues like sharing the wrong version, working on an outdated draft, and simply getting buried within an inbox—which isn't hard to imagine with upwards of 108.7 billion business emails being exchanged each day.⁵

These email and printing habits make efficient document collaboration incredibly difficult and unscalable, especially within large organizations; survey respondents from companies with 100+ employees cited collaboration as a more formidable document-related challenge than companies with less than 100 employees.

Additionally, the estimated time spent collaborating on documents—more specifically gathering, consolidating and deciphering feedback—is 6.9 hours per week per employee², which can add up quickly in both dollars and productivity cost.

81% found themselves working on the wrong version of a file.⁴

WORK TOGETHER, BETTER

1. ELIMINATE PAPER FROM COLLABORATION WORKFLOWS.

Printing to review costs both time and resources, and is unnecessary as printouts must be converted back to digital formats before sharing.

2. STOP COLLABORATING VIA EMAIL.

Sending documents and comments back and forth exacerbates the email overload issue and creates many opportunities for error.

3. ADOPT TOOLS FOR CLOUD-BASED COLLABORATION.

These tools are readily available and allow for real-time collaboration—keeping feedback, versioning, and progress in one place and easy to follow.

3

MODERNIZE SHARING + STORAGE

Only 9% utilize a cloud storage provider.



When the collaboration is done and the signatures have been applied, the document is finalized. So, what are the next steps?

For most businesses, it's time for the document to be shared with the appropriate parties and stored somewhere for quick and easy reference when needed—think marketing materials, sales contracts, etc.

However, our research shows that knowledge workers stick with their old habits for sharing their documents. **On average, survey respondents said that they send out 6 documents via email every day**—and one in three respondents said they receive 10 or more documents via email each day. What happens with those attachments is largely a mystery to the sender, as sharing via email provides no insight into whether a document has been reviewed—let alone opened (or buried in someone's inbox).

Oftentimes, documents are left to remain as email attachments without ever being saved or stored appropriately. But if recipients do choose to store the file somewhere, our survey results paint a clear picture of where it will likely end up: 80% of respondents say they regularly store documents on their desktop or company server, and 11% are still printing documents for storage in filing cabinets.

In our modern, mobile business world, these old-school sharing and storage methods lack the intelligence and anywhere accessibility we require for optimal productivity levels. The approach must be modernized with available cloud-based tools.

WORKERS SPEND:

3.5 hours/week filing and organizing documents

5 hours/week searching for documents¹

HOW TO GET STARTED

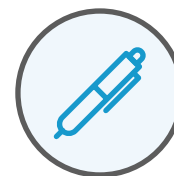
1. STOP SHARING DOCUMENTS AS MAIL ATTACHMENTS

They're often "stored" in the inbox, and senders have no insight into whether the file they shared was ever viewed. Cloud-based tools like Nitro Cloud track all document actions and interactions, so you always know the status of your file.

2. ADOPT AN ONLINE STORAGE PROVIDER.

Applications like Dropbox and Google Drive allow you to securely access your documents wherever you are—no waiting or lag time. Permissions features also keep your documents from falling into the wrong hands.

CLOSE THE GREAT DOCUMENT PRODUCTIVITY GAP



Based on the research conducted, it's clear that document-related challenges, frustrations and inefficiencies exist in great amounts within modern businesses. In fact, IDC estimates that document challenges are robbing most organizations of almost 21.3% of their overall productivity.²

The groundwork laid by that study provided a great opportunity for Nitro's survey and analysis to articulate the current state of document productivity in the workplace, and identify some major productivity benefits to be gained by modernizing employee document workflows through better use of available tools.

To recap, this report presented by Nitro and the PDF Association has illuminated three key opportunities to shrink the productivity gap, reduce costs and generate return on investment:



Speed Up Signing

Leverage modern e-signature solutions for more elegant, secure and cost-effective authorization processes.



Collaborate Smarter

Conduct document review in the browser vs. over email or on paper to minimize confusion and improve speed.



Modernize Sharing + Storage

Standardize on cloud-based document sharing and storage solutions to meet modern business challenges.

HOW DOES YOUR ORG RATE ON THE DOCUMENT PRODUCTIVITY SCALE?

STAGE 5

Optimal productivity through full adoption of cloud-based tools and document workflows.

STAGE 4

Cloud-based tools used for e-signing and document sharing; collaboration still done via email.

STAGE 3

Use of PDF editor for editing, form completion, and e-signing. Documents shared via email.

STAGE 2

Document sharing via email; files printed for review, signing, & form completion.

STAGE 1

Complete reliance on paper-based processes; severe productivity gap.



Smarter Documents for Everyone

Nitro accelerates the way businesses create, prepare, and sign documents. Anytime, anywhere — saving your workforce hours every day.

More than 500,000 organizations in nearly 200 countries -- including over 50% of the Fortune 500 -- rely on Nitro's award winning document productivity applications, Nitro Pro and Nitro Cloud, to move their business forward.

gonitro.com



The PDF Association exists to promote the adoption and implementation of International Standards for PDF technology across developers, software vendors and end-users. The Mission of the PDF Association is to promote Open Standards-based electronic document implementations using PDF technology through education, expertise and shared experience for stakeholders worldwide.

pdfa.org

¹Forrester, "The Forrester Wave™: E-Signatures, Q2 2013", April 2013

²IDC, "Bridging the Information Worker Productivity Gap", September 2012

³Association for Information and Image Management (AIIM) "Digital Signatures Making the Business Case", 2012

⁴Harris Interactive, "Knowledge Worker Survey", 2013

⁵The Radicati Group, Inc., Email Statistics Report, 2014–2018

⁶Ombud Open Research: eSignature Solutions, 2013