

# E-signature trends in Australia

Adobe EchoSign is the electronic signature solution you can trust, from the company that brought you Adobe PDF and Adobe Acrobat software. It incorporates the same technologies and security engineering processes relied on by financial institutions and governments around the world. With EchoSign, security is considered at every level—from the application code and networks to the physical facilities. Along with the most up-to-date technologies, EchoSign adheres to the latest best-practice policies for online security. That's why industry leaders including Aetna, BT Group, Dropbox, Google, and Procter & Gamble choose EchoSign to get documents signed—easily, securely, on any device.

## Rising citizen and consumer demand for electronic signatures

Worldwide, organizations are quickly adopting electronic signature solutions to help streamline business processes, improve security, and save money. Adobe's research shows that more than 50 million citizens have electronically signed more than 100 million electronic contracts utilizing a PC, tablet, or phone. Companies are moving to this technology for a number of reasons, including:

- The number one reason companies are moving to electronic signatures is to save money.
- 70% of business users agree that contracts are more efficient when sent and signed digitally.
- 67% of respondents agree that contracts are prone to potential defacing when sent using paper.
- 78% of respondents try to keep contracts digital to help the environment.<sup>1</sup>

Companies adopting electronic signatures at scale include Time Warner Cable, British Telecom, Facebook, Google, Groupon, and more. Typically, organizations will embed the e-signature capability into an existing line of business solution from SAP, Oracle, Microsoft, or Salesforce.com.

## Government services and e-signatures in Australia

In January 2014, Adobe conducted research across the user base of EchoSign in Australia to learn how businesses and governments can decrease costs, increase efficiency, and reduce the environmental impact of paper.<sup>2</sup> Key findings of the research included:

- 100% of respondents agree that e-signature solutions increase business efficiency.
- 76% of EchoSign customers in Australia believe that the government should do more to promote the use of electronic signatures.
- In particular, citizens recommend that government increase adoption across Commonwealth departments and all citizen- and business-facing services, and also help drive awareness regarding the legality of e-signatures.

A set of key themes emerged from citizens' written recommendations to government on how to increase e-signature adoption in Australia:

- Drive adoption across all Commonwealth departments and agencies, and implement e-signatures on government forms (business-to-government, employment documents).

76% of Adobe EchoSign customers in Australia believe that the government should do more to promote the use of electronic signatures.

<sup>1</sup> Adobe commissioned Edelman Berland to perform a survey among n=1,051 U.S. managers who draft, send, or sign contracts and agreements at companies, spring 2013.

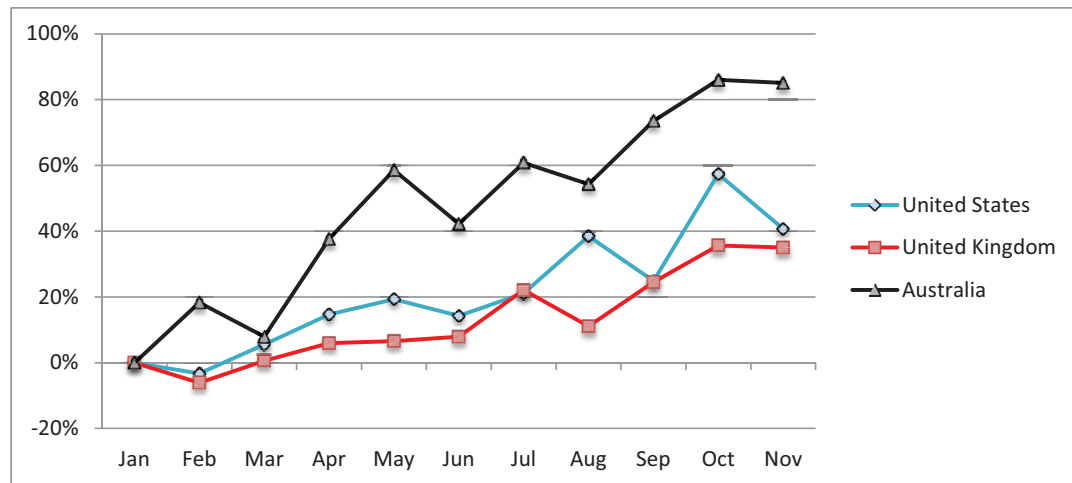
<sup>2</sup> Adobe research of Adobe EchoSign customers in Australia, n=103, January 2014.

- Increase education on the legality of e-signatures in Australia; for example, release a statement saying that e-signatures are indeed a speedier and legal option.
- Make it recognized under the Evidence Act of each state and territory; Federal and state governments may need to amend various legislation to define an e-signature and where it is allowed.
- Promote the paperless government: eSignatures reduce landfill and help reduce environmental impact.
- Create incentives for businesses to increase adoption.

Notably, many of the respondents made statements to the effect that most businesses in Australia are not aware of e-signature technology, so more action is needed to drive awareness. A number of citizens said that more action is needed to help businesses and citizens understand that e-signatures are safe—in fact, more safe than wet signatures—and legal.

## Adoption of e-signatures in Australia

The United States is the leading adopter of e-signatures, with approximately 11% adoption by businesses, which is expected to grow to 30% to 40% adoption by the year 2016. In second place is the U.K., with approximately 3.5% adoption by businesses, and Australia has approximately 2% adoption. That said, Australia has one of the highest growth rates in developed economies of e-signature use. Other countries that are starting to adopt e-signatures at scale include Belgium, Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark.



E-signature use growth rates in 2013 (Source: Adobe Research, January 2014)

Across developed economies in North America, Asia-Pacific, and Europe, electronic signatures are used primarily in one of four key use cases:

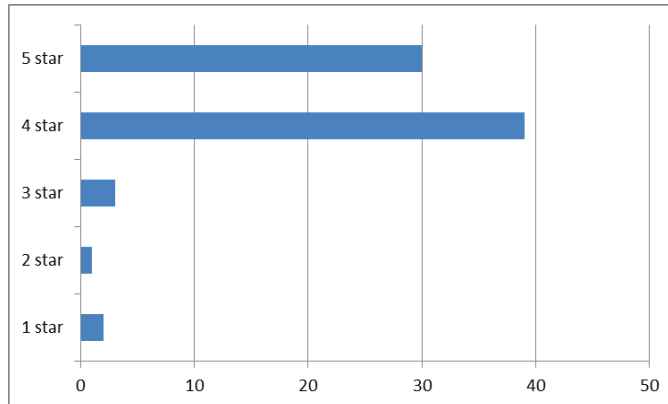
United Healthcare estimates a savings of 66 tons of paper in their first year using EchoSign. They also decreased transaction costs from US\$16 to US\$1.50.

- **Sales departments**—Companies like Google, British Telecom, Facebook, and more are using EchoSign as part of a CRM deployment (such as Salesforce.com) to automate the creation of an electronic contract and enable customers to sign electronically. This can increase deal closure rates from 54% to above 90% (source: United Healthcare).
- **HR departments**—Companies like Citrix are using EchoSign to accelerate employee onboarding, such as new-hire letters, or sales commission acknowledgements.
- **Legal departments**—Companies like NetApp and Google are using EchoSign to increase the efficiency of legal contract work for non-disclosure agreements, patent requests, and confidential business-to-business agreements.
- **Procurement departments**—Hundreds of companies are using electronic signatures to automate and streamline workflows with their vendors, to help keep business digital.

## Overall customer satisfaction with EchoSign in Australia

Customers in Australia have a very high level of satisfaction with EchoSign. Examples of feedback from our January 2014 survey include: "Product saves huge amounts of time and greatly enhances productivity." Also: "EchoSign is a great product, saves time, trees and money."

- Adobe received an average satisfaction score of 4.26 (on scale of 1-5, where 5=excellent).
- 90% of customers in Australia rated EchoSign as 4 or 5 for customer satisfaction.<sup>3</sup>



## Legality of e-signatures in Australia

In 1999, the Australian Federal Parliament passed the Electronic Transactions Act 1999 (ETA), and it came into force on March 15, 2000. The goals of the legislation were to recognize the importance of the information economy to the future economic and social prosperity of Australia; facilitate the use of electronic transactions; promote business and community confidence in the use of electronic transactions; and enable businesses and the community to use electronic communications in their dealings with government. As part of this legislation, electronic signatures were recognized as a valid form of legally binding signatures. Over the years, case history has supported this legality. A few examples (courtesy of Alan Tyree, University of Sydney) include:

- The High Court in *Attorney-General (SA) v Corporation of the City of Adelaide* [2013] HCA 3 held that a requirement for a signed statement by a solicitor certifying a by-law was satisfied by an email with the solicitor's name typed in. The court relied on the Electronic Transactions Act 2000 (SA).
- *Stuart v Hishon* [2013] NSWSC 766 concerned a requirement under the Limitations Act. An email with "Tom" typed at the end was held to be a signed acknowledgement of a debt. The court added: "It would be an almost lethal assault on common sense to take any other view." (At para 34).
- A "signature tool" (apparently sampling a finger or stylus "writing" on a laptop track pad) was held to be a signature for the purposes of the Electoral Act 1918 (Cth) in *Getup Ltd v Electoral Commissioner* [2010] FCA 869.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Adobe customer survey, n=103, January 2014.

## For more information

[www.echosign.adobe.com/en/home.html](http://www.echosign.adobe.com/en/home.html)



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