

Seiden, Alder, Rothman, Petosa & Matthewman, P.A.

Adobe Acrobat 5.0 and Acrobat Messenger improve information sharing and access for firm staff and clients; support formation of legal e-filing company

PROFILE

- Law firm with leading technology practice and founder of Court CD, Inc.
- Employees: 35 in three offices in south Florida
- Headquarters: Boca Raton, Florida
- www.seidenlaw.com and www.courtcd.com

BENEFITS SUMMARY

- Adobe Acrobat and Adobe PDF enable the firm to handle in seconds tasks—court filings, finding documents, shipping client materials—that previously took hours.
- There are expanded opportunities for electronic submissions because the United States federal courts and many state courts have standardized on PDF for all digital filing.
- Web-based commenting tools in Acrobat 5.0 simplify the task of handling input when the firm works with outside legal counsel on joint submissions.
- Advanced security features, such as password protection and the ability to lock content, permit the firm's lawyers to confidently deliver electronic materials.
- Platform- and application-independent Adobe PDF files ensure that electronic documents look exactly like the originals created by the legal staff.
- The ease of using Adobe Acrobat and Acrobat Messenger supports better integration of the once separate paper and electronic processes for legal documents.
- E-signature features in Acrobat 5.0 support a legally binding, end-to-end electronic workflow for the firm's staff.

For the full-service litigation firm of Seiden, Alder, Rothman, Petosa & Matthewman, technology is a boon to business. The firm has one of the nation's leading technology practices and relies on powerful software tools to bring new efficiencies to filing cases with government entities, sharing sensitive documents with clients, and managing internal documentation. Supporting this move to an electronic document workflow are Adobe Acrobat 5.0 software, Acrobat Messenger software, and Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF).

“Adobe Acrobat software enhances our workflow,” says Joel Rothman, a partner and head of the Technology Practice Group. “With Acrobat, Acrobat Messenger, and Adobe PDF, we can search for and find information instantly, and handle in seconds tasks—filing materials, locating documents, shipping client files—that previously took hours.” The firm's success with Adobe Acrobat prompted it to start Court CD, a company offering e-filing services to attorneys practicing in areas where electronic briefs are accepted.

Nationwide legal standard

The United States federal judiciary and most state courts have standardized on PDF for all electronic filing. As a result, many courts nationwide allow briefs in Adobe PDF to be uploaded directly to their Web sites. In these instances, attorneys at Seiden, Alder, Rothman, Petosa & Matthewman and at firms that utilize Court CD services save the time it takes to serve electronic briefs to many parties. Previously, legal staff hand-delivered materials to courthouses. Once

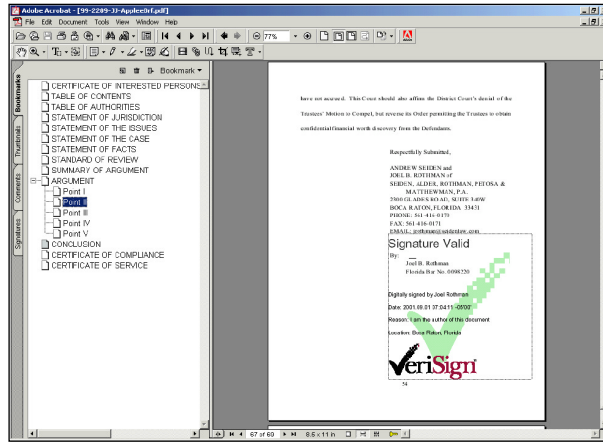
filed, documents were available on a first-come, first-served basis, so delays in accessing materials were common.

“Adobe Acrobat and Adobe PDF bring much-needed efficiencies to the legal process,” says Rothman. “Now, instead of lots of paper and lost time, we have immediate access to information in Adobe PDF. We can share information with clients, send readily accessible electronic documents to courts for review by judges, and still adhere to requirements governing document security and availability.”

The universally accessible Adobe PDF files—platform- and application-independent files available to anyone with the free Adobe Acrobat Reader® software—are critical to giving staff and clients rapid access to information. Equally important is that documents in Adobe PDF look exactly like the originals. “Even slight inconsistencies between documents can invalidate information,” explains Rothman. “Adobe PDF ensures that the materials our lawyers create match the electronic documents we share with judges and others.”

Conversion to RTF, e-signatures

With Adobe Acrobat 5.0, the firm prepares documents faster than ever. Using Acrobat 5.0, lawyers can digitally sign documents, use Acrobat commenting tools to mark up Adobe PDF materials from within their Web browsers, apply security to files (including password protection and locked



The law firm of Seiden, Alder, Rothman, Petosa & Matthewman uses Adobe Acrobat to bring new efficiencies to its processes. Its success with Acrobat was the catalyst for the firm's founding of Court CD, an e-filing services company. E-signature capabilities in Acrobat 5.0 support a legally binding, end-to-end electronic workflow for the firm.

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*Joel Rothman
Partner and head of the
Technology Practice Group
Seiden, Alder, Rothman,
Petosa & Matthewman*

content), and convert Adobe PDF documents to Rich Text Format (RTF) files for extensive editing. “Adobe Acrobat 5.0 and Adobe PDF offer advantages that we couldn’t pass up,” says Rothman. For instance, the new RTF conversion feature lets lawyers take documents in Adobe PDF from outside counsel, convert the materials to RTF files for editing, and then output the revised files to Adobe PDF to return to partners and clients.

The Acrobat based workflow also makes it easy to comment on and review documents. Hyperlinks in Adobe PDF files allow readers to jump from citations in one record to documents containing case law overviews. And when firms collaborate on joint submissions, Acrobat 5.0 enables lawyers to comment electronically on drafts from within their Web browsers, instead of routing paper. Says Rothman, “This eliminates the faxing, phone calls, and hours of work that previously accompanied what should have been a simple process.”

An electronic messenger

Materials created by the firm’s lawyers are only part of the many legal documents in cases. Business contracts, evidence from local authorities, and correspondence from clients usually exist only on paper. Previously, managing the paper along with the electronic documents was difficult. The options were to print everything to paper or to scan all paper documents. “Neither alternative was ideal,” explains Rothman. “Con-

stantly printing, faxing, and managing paper is expensive, and scanning every document was inefficient.” Adobe Acrobat Messenger software changed that.

With Adobe Acrobat Messenger and a Fujitsu scanner, the firm provides a readily accessible walk-up station that everyone can use to convert paper to compact, searchable Adobe PDF files for delivery by e-mail and more. The result: once difficult-to-manage paper documents are incorporated effortlessly into a digital workflow built around Adobe PDF, eliminating such tasks as sending documents to clients by fax and courier.

“Acrobat Messenger provides an easy way to scan, annotate, and deliver Adobe PDF files throughout our office or worldwide,” says Rothman. “It’s a smart, cost-effective replacement for outbound faxing or express delivery of materials. With Acrobat Messenger, we can annotate electronic documents in Adobe PDF, e-mail them to clients and colleagues, save them to our network, and post them on the intranet.”

Bottom-line results

Changing how law firms operate is a slow process, Rothman points out. But with Acrobat 5.0 and Acrobat Messenger software, things are improving. “The ease of using Acrobat and Acrobat Messenger removes many of the barriers to getting legal staffs to work differently. For us, the results from using Acrobat software speak for themselves through better operations and faster communications with clients and outside legal professionals.”

TOOLBOX

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Microsoft Windows NT® 4.0 Server

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