

Reporting Solution's pdf-it™

Have you heard about or read up on the latest information on digital signatures? Are you still confused at all the options and opinions on the subject?

For many years, reporting firms have been receiving ASCII files directly from the reporters. This gave firms the ability to format and/or edit transcripts prior to the creation and distribution of the hard copy or emails. With the passing of the digital signature policy by the Court Reporters Certification Board (CRCB) of Texas in January 2006, court reporters and reporting firms were faced with a difficult decision and few options:

1. Ignore the rule; or
2. Require reporters to physically print and sign the original and then personally drive or courier original to the office; or
3. Require reporters to send ASCII files to the office and allow the firm to sign the original transcript on the reporter's behalf (using Reallegal's E-Transcript Signatures); or
4. Require reporters to sign using Reallegal's E-transcript Signatures and send the signed file to the reporting firm.

Clearly option one is not prudent for reporters or firms. Non-compliance risks disciplinary action which may include a fine up to \$5,000 and possible revocation of license by the CRCB. Option number two is not economical. Unnecessary time and money are spent delivering physical transcripts. Option number three circumvents the entire intent of the reporter maintaining control of the signature process. The reporter, as a court official and author of the document, should be the only authorized person to sign the transcript, regardless if it is a physical or electronic version of the original.

Until now, Option four has been the only method that provided an economical and workable solution. But now you have a better choice - Reporting Solutions pdf-it.

Why use Adobe's® PDF? Adobe® *currently* offers many of the functions the court reporting industry has become accustomed to within the E-Transcript product. PDF features digital signatures, headers, footers, bolding, watermarks, etc. Also, since PDF is "open source" it provides a flexible platform for programmers to develop *future* needs of customers.

Now the next challenge is to address the digital signature and balance the needs of everyone involved. By its design, the application of the digital signature prevents tampering of the document by receivers. So how does one edit/format the file after it is signed? Quite frankly, you don't. The vast majority of transcripts received by reporting firms only need their formatting preferences applied. Because many reporters provide their services for multiple firms, it would not be practical for reporters to remember all the particulars regarding formatting. With pdf-it, reporters don't need to. The reporter simply selects the reporting firm the work was performed for, and the formatting preferences designated by the firm will be automatically applied. This provides both parties confidence that the formatting will be accurate.

What about editing? If editing of the transcript were possible, it causes three new issues. First, if a firm were to edit the transcript the reporter's digital signature would become invalid and would have to be digitally signed again. So, why not have the reporter correct the mistake and resign? Secondly, if reporting firms were capable of editing the transcript, what would prevent other parties from doing the same? Thirdly, what would be the limits to the court reporting firm's editing role? Case information, index page, appearance page, misspellings, etc.? It becomes too subjective. By restricting the editing capability, everyone is provided assurance of content integrity, regardless of what parties have had access to the transcript.

In conclusion, pdf-it provides the reporting industry another choice with the flexibility and security the industry demands.

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