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Goodbye paper and ink, welcome digital handwritten signature!

The flow of paper documents still plays an important role in company processes. The use of paper media is often due solely to the need to capture the handwritten signature of the competent person. Efforts to date to replace a handwritten signature with an electronic one have come up against obstacles and have failed to eliminate completely the signing of paper documents. The digitalisation of a handwritten signature is a means by which hard copy outputs and the related costs simply vanish, without any need to change established habits but while meeting the legal requirements for a written form.

A key part of the process of integrating and optimising company applications is the management of business processes, which in itself includes managing internal and external data flows and relations across the organisation (approval processes, reports).

Various applications process business opportunities (contracts, orders, delivery notes, protocols) and transactions (invoices, orders), inclusive of their signing by responsible employees, suppliers and clients, and verification of identity.

The preservation of transparency and control of processes represents a key part of this.

The processes themselves are mostly accompanied by fairly high costs for the creation, processing, circulation and archiving of physical documents. The majority of these documents must be produced in written form, which prevents their integration and the optimal transition to paper-free electronic document flows. Processes are lengthy and ineffective.

SHORTCOMINGS OF APPROACHES TO DATE

The methods applied to date on a base of electronic signatures cannot fully replace the physical signing of paper documents due to certain limitations, and they can even produce additional costs.

For example, a certified electronic signature, which is anchored in law as a substitute for a written form, works out inadequate for mass application from a technical perspective due to weak penetration and high costs in applications. A standard electronic signature does not have enough acknowledgement in law. A similar situation can be seen with other forms of expression of will, which would adequately and clearly prove the identity of a person that has expressed consent other than by a physical signature on paper.

DIGITALISATION OF HANDWRITTEN SIGNATURES

Gradually new approaches have started to appear in an effort to fill this gap in the market. One of them is the idea to digitalise a handwritten signature and its fixed association with the content of the electronic form of a paper document as the document is sealed with a digital signature. A digital handwritten signature contains biometric elements captured electronically on a special signature device. These elements represent individual nuances characterising the specific person that is signing. It is this biometry that allows us to verify and check back the identity of the person signing just the same as we would if putting ink to paper, and we can even verify their identity in real time when documents are being signed. This solution fundamentally changes the significance of the electronic signature application and in highly elegant fashion satisfies the requirements of our legislation for a written form, in line with EU requirements. This then makes it a legally acceptable substitute, which in turn opens the way for full electronisation of document and data flows and for automating and raising the efficiency of processes while integrating and optimising applications.

BENEFITS OF PAPER-FREE COMMUNICATION

A key benefit comes in the shape of substantial cost savings for paper, toner, photocopying, scanners, shredders, transport, and the processing of hard copies, their filing and archiving, while also accelerating and raising the performance of the whole organisation and practically all applications, thanks to the ease of access. The use of mobile signature devices at various locations also boosts the flexibility of organisation. As a result, this approach eliminates the need for high investments. Removing paper processes while integrating and optimising existing applications of the organisation lets you refinance a substantial portion of costs directly from generated savings without the need for major changes.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES

Suitable areas for optimisation of company processes by the introduction of digital handwritten signatures are as follows:

- quality control commonly carried out in research and in manufacturing operations, where procedures must be approved regularly by a physical signature,
- data collection and their approval at several points and in several applications,
- the collation of documents from field workers requiring a signature, signing of service reports,
- forms for the application of changes, time sheets, appraisal results, expense reports,
- documents on procurement, purchase and sales contracts and orders, contractual addenda, the freight and delivery of goods.

As an example, let's look at processes linked to the collection of data and documentation, which require the signature of workers in the field. Especially in cases of a higher number of documents and higher volume of individual tasks, these pro-

cesses are often complicated and slow, taking up to several weeks. Collected data are often manually transferred after confirmation by signature and are mutually verified between individual applications and between different geographical points. By switching to an electronic version, it is possible to send the document practically to all applications immediately after signing by digital signature. The degree of accuracy and security of data processing is increased by eliminating the possible loss of paper documents or errors in the transcription of data. This results in increased output of workers and lower demands for processing.

SOLUTION AT HAND

A digital handwritten signature greatly contributes to the integration and optimisation of company applications, to combating pointless costs and to the automation of management, commercial and production processes where it was not possible to date because of the need to sign documents in paper form.

SOLUTION AT HAND

You can find out more about how to ensure effective support of processes for the management of IT services in the product documentation and on the website www.posam.sk. Feel free to contact also the Sales Division of our company.

The company is certified according to ISO 9001:2000, ISO/IEC 20000-1:2005, ISO/IEC 27001:2005, OHSAS 18001:2007 and ISO 14001:2004. It is the holder of the National Prize of the Slovak Republic for Quality and was the first Slovak company to receive the award "Recognized for Excellence in Europe" of the European foundation for quality management EFQM, of which it has been a full member since 2007.

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