

A Real Estate Professional's Guide to E-Signatures

by Pem Guerry | Sep 19, 2016 | Real Estate



Property sales might be the end goal of real estate, but it takes a lot of paperwork to get there – starting with the bids and contracts facilitated by real estate professionals.

Today, most of that paperwork is started in electronic form. Wouldn't life be simpler and transactions happen quicker if those documents could just stay electronic throughout the signing process? That's why e-signatures are becoming increasingly popular in the real estate industry: They allow buyers, sellers and all other parties involved to sign a document digitally and securely, saving time, money and resources.

Avoid the real estate paperwork with e-signatures...

The Different Types of Electronic Signatures:

Every real estate professional has something to gain from using e-signatures, but it's important to note that not every kind of e-signature is a good fit for real estate documents.

There are two types of electronic signatures – [dependent e-signatures](#) and [independent e-signatures](#). Both are legally accepted forms of electronic signatures, but the technology behind the two is significantly different.

A *dependent* e-signature remains on the server of your electronic signature vendor, and the image of the signature is placed on the document. Because the vendor has the evidence of the signature, you would need to obtain that evidence from your vendor if the legitimacy of the signature is ever questioned.

An *independent* e-signature, such as [zipLogix Digital Ink®](#), embeds the evidence and validity of the signature into the signed document itself, and this type of electronic signature is also called a [digital signature](#). Because the legal evidence of the signature is digitally contained within the signed document, there's no need to depend on your e-signature vendor to keep your signed documents on file or to provide you with updates to the file over time. Independent e-signatures also [use tamper-evident technology](#) to immediately detect any potential fraud; robust identity authentication to make sure only authorized individuals have access to documents; and comprehensive, independent audit trails to track and record every part of the signing process.

The Benefits of Electronic Signatures in Real Estate:

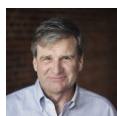
Why should real estate professionals make the move to paperless? There are many reasons, including:

- **Mobility.** Mobility is one of the greatest perks of e-signatures for real estate agents and brokers because the e-signature technology allows a user to sign a document from virtually anywhere. Because many e-signatures are supported by cloud-based software, you're able to e-sign a document from the convenience of any mobile phone, tablet or laptop, omitting the need to be in an office. This means that while you're bustling around to showings, meetings or closings, you can simultaneously send time-sensitive, important documents to your clients and partners. And, in turn, your clients and partners are also able to conveniently sign documents and return them to you from any location and any device.
- **Speed.** In the real estate industry, time is of the essence, and a 10-minute delay in getting a signed offer to a seller could potentially cost your buyer the deal. With e-signatures, once the user signs the document, it is instantly and securely sent to the original owner or to the party designated to sign next, reducing bottlenecks that often occur with mailing, faxing, emailing and printing contracts and forms.
- **Efficiency and Accuracy.** E-signature technology can require mandatory information and signed fields, ensuring a document is not submitted unless it's 100 percent complete. This reduces the number of incomplete documents that are returned to you and the time spent duplicating efforts on revised paperwork. In addition, electronic signatures decrease the need for filing or handling paperwork so you can dedicate time to more prominent tasks.
- **Cost.** Because e-signature technology is supported by cloud-based software, it can quickly [reduce expenses](#). With e-signatures, you no longer need to consider paper, ink, shipping costs (including envelopes and postage) or additional mileage to deliver documents as part of the budget for document processing.
- **Security.** Real estate documents often contain sensitive information and represent some of life's most important transactions. And with cyber-crime on the rise, agents must be vigilant about protecting clients' data and documents. That points to a key advantage with independent e-signatures over dependent ones: Should an [e-signed document's validity ever be called into question](#), agents and their organizations can know with certainty that those documents are legally sound and defensible because the evidence of the signature is embedded into the document itself. And because independent e-signatures adhere to published, international standards, the signed document is valid forever.

Make your life a little easier...

The use of e-signatures in real estate provides numerous benefits to all parties involved, but the independent e-signature is the best e-signature solution for real estate. Independent e-signatures ensure maximum security of clients' confidential information and guarantee longevity of the digitally signed documents without making you dependent on an e-signature provider.

For real estate professionals, this type of independence matters.



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Pem Guerry is the Executive Vice President of SIGNiX, a digital signature solutions provider that makes signing documents online safe, secure, and legal for any business. SIGNiX partners with zipLogix to offer an independently verifiable, cloud-based digital signature solution for the real estate industry, which combines workflow convenience with superior security. Learn more about what makes SIGNiX different at www.signix.com.