



Digital Signatures

Using Digital Certificates to digitally sign documents

Documents may be digitally signed using a digital certificate. Similar to handwritten signatures, a digital signature authenticates to the recipient that a document has been approved or acknowledged by those individuals that have placed their signature in the document.

Digital signatures however provide added assurance that the information has not been altered since it was sent and by providing verification of the signers digital identity.

In order to digitally sign a document, an individual must have:

- A digital certificate either in Soft Certificate form (PKI) or a hard certificate (PIV card).
 - The use of a PIV card certificate requires a card reader.
- Software that will permit the use of a digital signature. Three options available with VA include:
 - Adobe Acrobat Reader (Adobe Reader requires that signatures be enabled in the document **prior to opening it with Reader**)
 - Adobe Acrobat Professional
 - Microsoft Office

An image of a 'wet' handwritten signature can be attached to the digital signature although it is not required. There are two VA standard formats for digital signature:

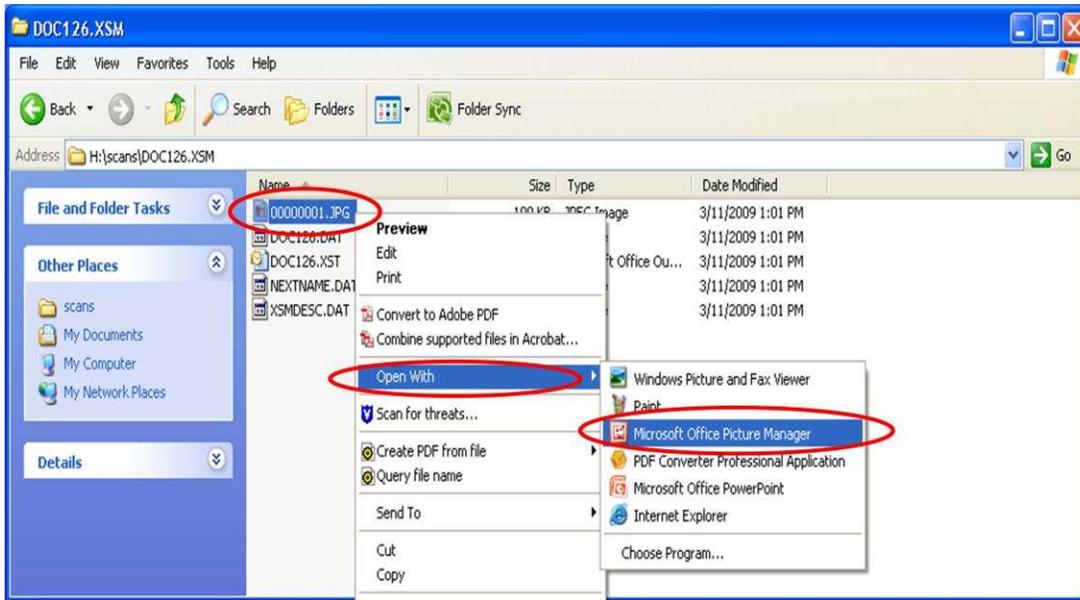
- A signature with digital documentation and date
- A Signature alone



• Creating a Wet Signature

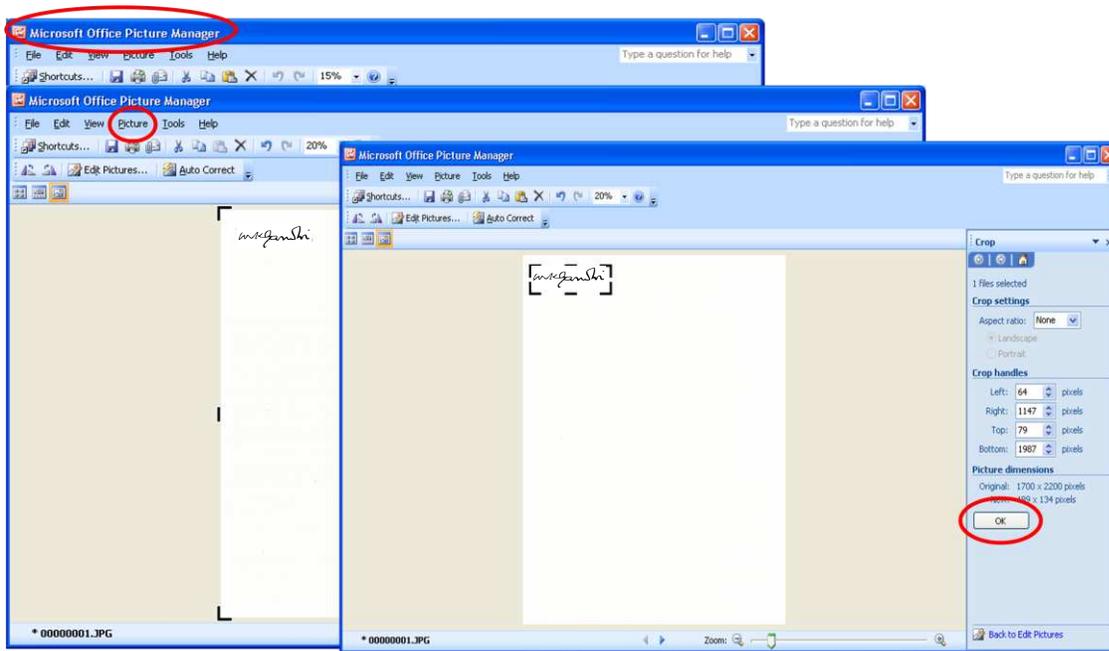
To create a handwritten signature:

- Sign your name to a clean blank piece of paper using a dark pen.
- Scan the signature to your desktop as a jpg format file.
- Open the jpg image using **Microsoft Office Picture Manager**.

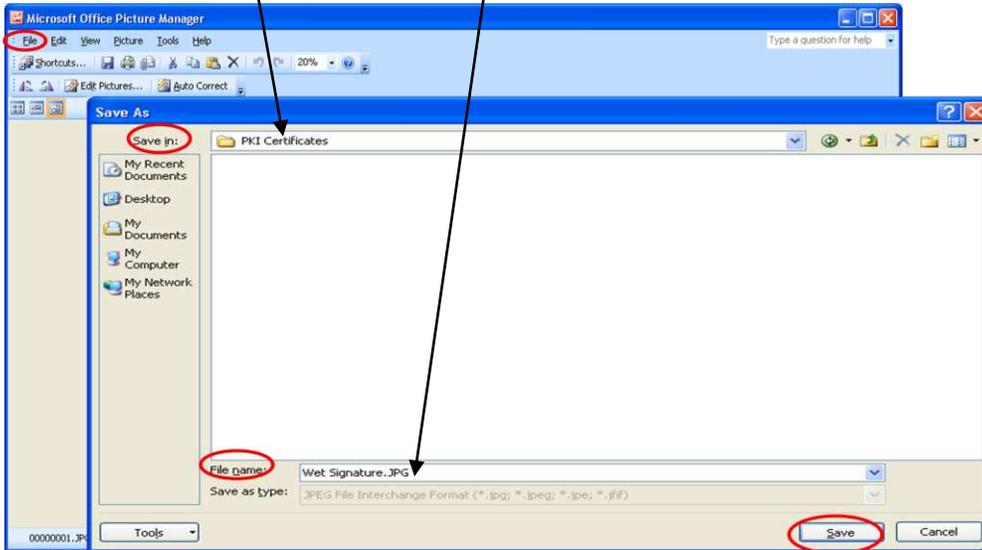


In Microsoft Office Picture Manager:

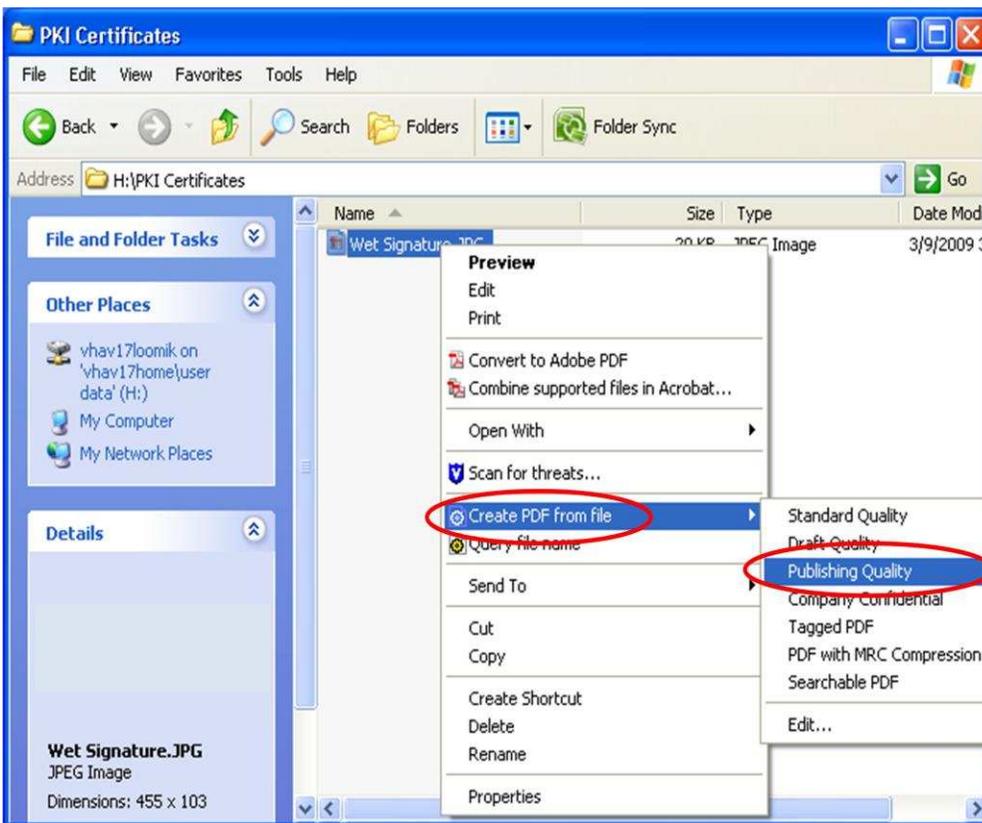
- Left click over "Picture" and Select "Crop"
- Crop your signature
- Select OK



- Left click over "File" and select "Save As"
- In the 'Save In' field: Choose a location that you will remember.
- Under File Name enter "Wet Signature" or another name you will remember.
- Select Save

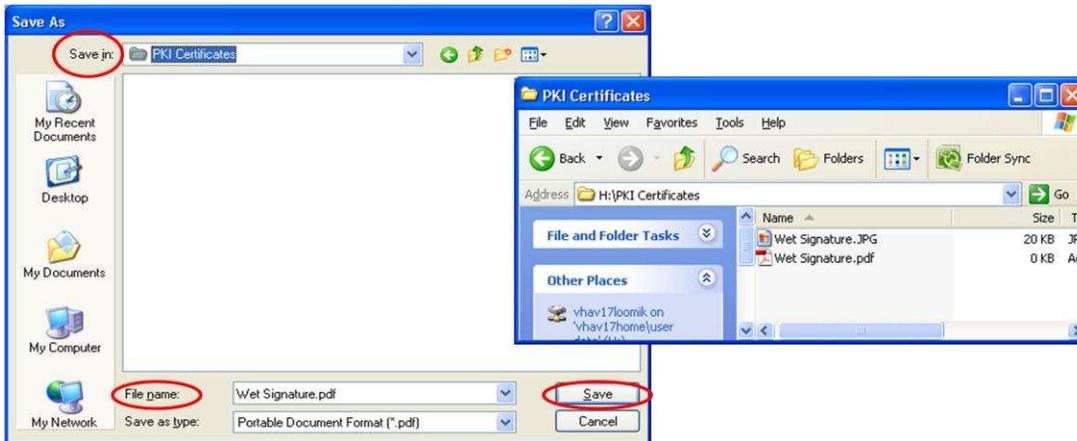


- Locate the jpg you just created and right click.
- Click "Create PDF from file" > "Publishing Quality"



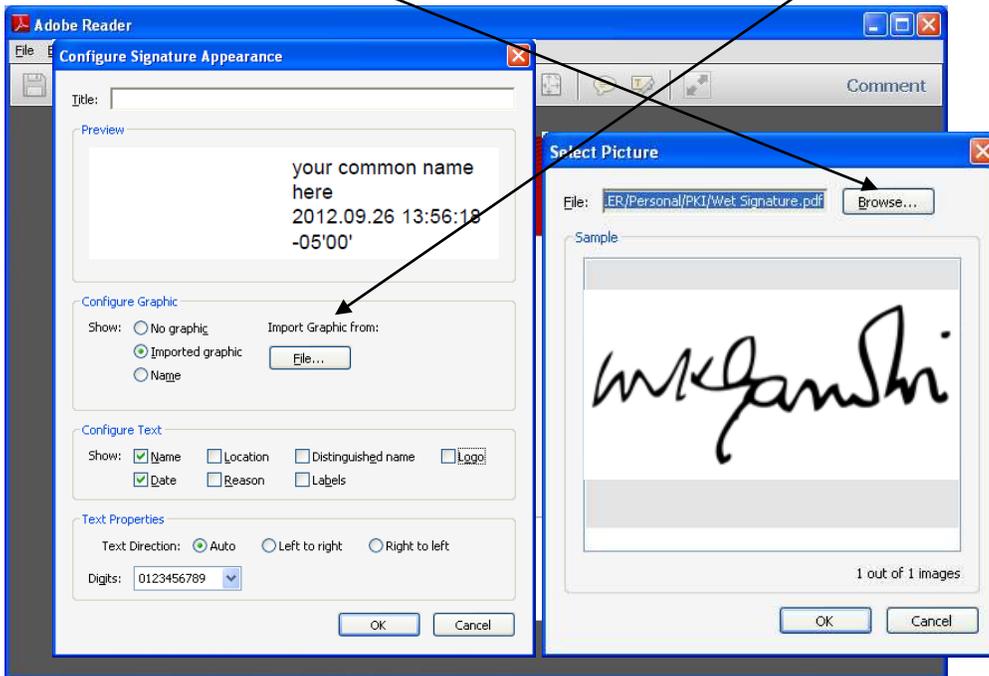
A pop up window will be displayed to save the document;

- In the Save In field: Choose the same location in which you stored your JPG file
- Under File Name enter "Wet Signature"
- Select Save and remember the location. It is now a PDF File
- When you have finished you should have two wet signatures in two formats stored in the same location - a PDF and a JPG.



To set Signature preferences in Adobe Reader:

- Open Adobe Reader
- Click EDIT > PREFERENCES > SECURITY > NEW
- Click the Imported Graphic radio button and click FILE
- Click browse to find your wet signature PDF file.
- Click OK

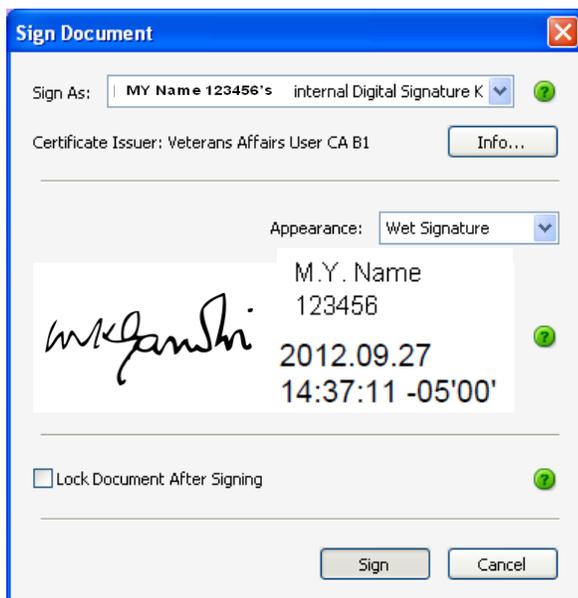


- Uncheck the checkboxes for Location, Reason, Distinguished Name, Labels and Logo
- Enter a Name in the Title field and Click OK



When a fillable / saveable form document is received with signature fields, the signature field can be clicked to bring up a 'Sign Document' window.

- Click the Sign As field drop down arrow and select a current certificate
- Click the Appearance drop down field to select your 'Wet Signature'.
- Click SIGN.
- You will then be asked to Publish the document to save it. After it is published, do not save the document again over the signed form or it will invalidate the signature.



If you continue to have problems after setting up Adobe Reader to sign documents, please see also <http://vaww.sde.portal.va.gov/sites/fo/FOWiki/Wiki/Adobe%20Acrobat%20Form%20Error.aspx>