

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Business Objectives**

- Create a paperless work environment to improve process efficiency, auditability and productivity

**The Problem**

- Lengthy approval cycles for time-sensitive, mission-critical documents
- Lack of visibility into processes
- Time-consuming and costly paper management

**The Solution**

- OneSpan Sign e-signatures

**Benefits**

- Time savings for action officers
- Dramatic reduction in paper
- Non-repudiation for legal purposes
- Auditability readiness
- Operational efficiency
- Compressed approval cycles
- Increased security and auditability of online documents

# THE U.S. JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF: PAVING THE WAY FOR E-SIGNATURES IN GOVERNMENT SINCE 1996

## Internal Expansion of E-Signatures to the JCS Comptroller's Office Returns Hours to Action Officers and Heightens Organizational Efficiencies

Acting in an advisory capacity for the President of the United States and the Secretary of Defense, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) is responsible for policy, planning, training, and ensuring personnel readiness of their respective branches of military.

The JCS was the first Federal organization to deploy electronic signatures. In late 1996, the JCS began using OneSpan Sign e-signatures to create a paperless workflow for the organization's Joint Staff Action Processing Program (JSAP), which also includes use by Combat and Command units worldwide. All JCS action requests, documents, and forms are created in Microsoft Office and electronically signed and authenticated using OneSpan Sign.

"The final hurdle in the JCS paperless action processing system was to provide the highest echelons of staff with a means to securely hand-sign documents electronically. OneSpan Sign provided us with that capability. The savings in man-hours involved has been substantial," says Lieutenant Commander Chris Agan, JCS. Today, the JCS continues to benefit from the cost and time savings associated with a digital work environment across all departments and processes – in what is now the longest running deployment of e-signatures in government. Approximately five years after the JCS initially began using e-signatures, the Joint Staff Comptroller's Office began using it to approve 2,500 acquisition contracts and financial actions annually.



The final hurdle in the JCS paperless action processing system was to provide the highest echelons of staff with a means to securely hand-sign documents electronically. OneSpan Sign provided us with that capability. The savings in man-hours involved has been substantial."

**Lieutenant Commander Chris Agan**  
Joint Chiefs of Staff

## The Comptroller's Office

Within JCS, the Joint Staff Comptroller manages Joint Staff financial resources, as well as financial resources provided by other agencies for Joint Staff use. Security, accountability, transparency and compliance with U.S. General Ledger Guidance, the Chief Financial Officers Act, and the Government Management Reform Act are crucial.

The Comptroller's Office had unique e-signature requirements. They needed to integrate e-signature capability through the JCS's Local Area Network (LAN) at the Pentagon. They developed a portal to their Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, Momentum® Financials, and integrated e-signatures from OneSpan.

This solution brings e-signatures into web processes through Extranet or Intranet sites, supporting e-forms such as IBM Lotus Forms and Microsoft InfoPath forms. As a result, the Comptroller's Office has the flexibility of logging into the portal to e-sign, or routing documents for e-signature through FloWare, the Defense Messaging System for email ad-hoc routing.

In the Comptroller's Office, the responsibility of certifying and authorizing expenses is restricted to 30 individuals. There are four positions of authority in this division: the Accountable Official, Certifying Officer, Disbursing Officer and Supervisor. These officials use e-signatures for project accounting and general ledger functions, as well as:

- Funds Certifications and Disbursements
- Expense Authorizations up to \$50,000 per funding incident (generally one to two pages, with one or two signatures)
- Contracts and Purchase Actions up to \$300 million (accompanied by a single signature sheet)

## Hand-scripted E-Signatures with External Partners

The Comptroller's Office quickly realized the value of the software's encryption capabilities as well as the ability to capture a digitized hand-scripted e-signature.

All accounting for military and defense spending is processed through a sister agency known as the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS). When the Comptroller's Office is dealing with external partners such as these, the Comptroller and authorized signers will apply a digitized hand-scripted e-signature to documents in lieu of digitally signing with a Common Access Card (CAC).

## E-Signature Solution Requirements

- Connect to the JCS Classified and Unclassified Local Area Networks (LAN)
- Offer worldwide collaboration capability
- Integrate with their portal
- Be web-based
- Support extranet and intranet sites
- Support e-forms
- Securely apply a digitized cursive signature and interoperate with the CAC PKI



In fact, digitized handwritten signatures were one of the product features that persuaded the DFAS to support e-signatures fifteen years ago. The resulting e-signature looks just like its traditional ink counterpart, except that it is accompanied by a time and date stamp. To authenticate the signer, DFAS holds a wet-ink signature card similar to what is used by banks, to compare against the JCS e-signature and confirm it is not a forgery.

## Solution Impact & Results

E-Signatures are part of a broader opportunity to return hours to action offices. The JCS saves significantly in annual paper, shipping, archiving, labor, and other costs — while better protecting critical information assets, more efficiently processing decisions, heightening responsiveness, and streamlining workflows.

OneSpan Sign's audit trail also provided beneficial auditability readiness. Because the solution embeds the

audit trail into the e-signed document, the Comptroller's Office can store e-records in any system.

The Comptroller's Office therefore stores e-signed financial and acquisition documents in their ERP for six years and five months, or longer in certain cases. When needed, they can quickly call up these records without having to wait on DFAS to archive or retrieve files, thereby making it faster and easier to prepare for a financial audit.

Finally, because the embedded audit trail creates a vendor-independent record that can be verified offline, the e-signed documents can also be securely shared with auditors and other agencies, and distributed through any means, including Microsoft SharePoint, email, or via the portal.

## Conclusion

OneSpan's security, document authentication, and workflow automation capabilities are an invaluable part of the JCS's day-to-day work processes. With all JCS action requests, documents and forms electronically signed and authenticated with OneSpan Sign, not only has the entire JCS organization benefited from the cost and time savings associated with having a paperless working environment, this has empowered other Federal organizations to follow the same steps. Having moved forward so strongly as an original early adopter of e-signatures, the JCS has become an agent of change and a model for many other Defense agencies to also implement e-signatures into their workflows.

*This case study is based on a 2015 [webcast](#) featuring a presentation by Mr. Dennis Savage, Comptroller (CFO), JCS.*



OneSpan enables financial institutions and other organizations to succeed by making bold advances in their digital transformation. We do this by establishing trust in people's identities, the devices they use, and the transactions that shape their lives. We believe that this is the foundation of enhanced business enablement and growth. More than 10,000 customers, including over half of the top 100 global banks, rely on OneSpan solutions to protect their most important relationships and business processes. From digital onboarding to fraud mitigation to workflow management, OneSpan's unified, open platform reduces costs, accelerates customer acquisition, and increases customer satisfaction.



Copyright© 2018 OneSpan North America Inc., all rights reserved. OneSpan™, the "O" logo, "BE BOLD. BE SECURE.™", DEALFLO™, V-HUB™, DIGIPASS® and CRONTO® are registered or unregistered trademarks of OneSpan North America Inc. or its affiliates in the U.S. and other countries. Any other trademarks cited herein are the property of their respective owners.

Last Update January 2019.

### CONTACT US

For more information:  
[info@OneSpan.com](mailto:info@OneSpan.com)  
[OneSpan.com/sign](https://OneSpan.com/sign)