

\$5.5 billion was spent in the U.S. on 2012's "Small Business Saturday."

SIGN OF THE TIMES

Easily add signatures with Adobe's new software

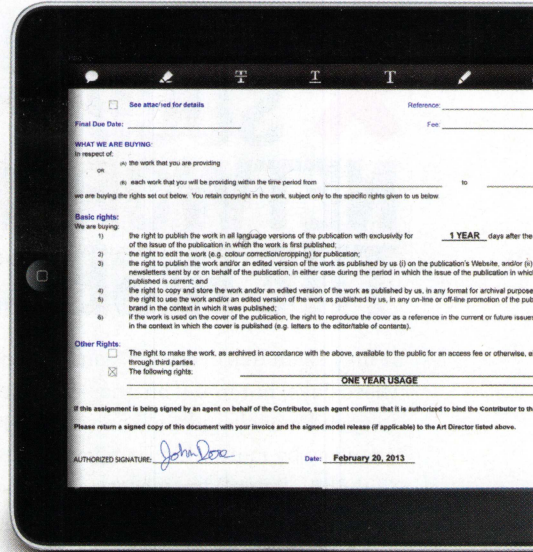
Picture it: you receive an email about forms or contracts you need to sign back at the office. You read this email on a touchscreen-enabled device – your smartphone, perhaps, or your tablet. And you wonder why you can't just draw your signature on the screen using your finger.

Wonder no more. The digital-media experts at software giant Adobe have created solutions to this and other productivity gaps with Adobe Acrobat XI, released late last year.

To better understand the issues businesspeople were experiencing with technology, Adobe sponsored a white paper last summer. What they found: people were losing time researching and assembling documents, managing the document-review process, working with forms and, of course, reviewing and signing documents.

The result: Adobe integrated EchoSign, its online signature service, into its latest Adobe Acrobat release. EchoSign allows you to electronically sign documents and send them to others for their signatures. Previous versions of Acrobat allowed users to sign PDFs, but the incorporation of EchoSign makes it easier, not to mention more secure. Now, even the free Adobe Reader software lets you sign forms on touchscreen devices.

Need to gather information from clients? No problem. Use FormsCentral, Adobe's PDF-form creation tool, which Adobe also merged into the new Acrobat. FormsCentral can designate certain fields as "required," and otherwise help users complete forms whether they use Reader, Acrobat or a Web browser.



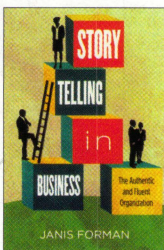
Adobe scratched other itches in this release, as well. For instance, Acrobat XI lets you package documents stored in Office 365 and SharePoint right from its interface. It also lets you export a PDF's contents to a usable PowerPoint document, as well as its Microsoft Office suitemates Word and Excel.

—Luigi Benetton

ON THE SHELF

Need a few business books to read on a cold winter night? Try these three insightful releases.

01



Storytelling in Business: The Authentic and Fluent Organization

Janis Forman

Stanford Business Books

Companies need a compelling story to draw in the customer. In this book, Janis Forman, founder of UCLA's Management Communication Program, explains how a good story can help everything from customer engagement and employee morale to defining a company's missions and goals. She offers practical advice by showing readers how successful companies, such as Chevron and FedEx, crafted – and made use of – their unique stories.

02



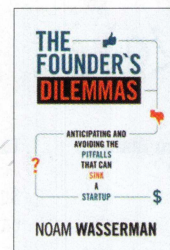
Playing to Win: How Strategy Really Works

A.G. Lafley and Roger L. Martin

Harvard Business Review Press

A.G. Lafley (former president of Procter & Gamble) and Roger Martin (dean of the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management) explain that many businesses fail to create a solid strategy, and most make the same mistakes – such as hiring consultants to make the difficult decisions – over and over again. *Playing To Win* offers easy-to-follow tips on how to create strategies, both day-to-day and longer-term, that really work.

03



The Founder's Dilemmas: Anticipating and Avoiding the Pitfalls That Can Sink a Startup

Noam Wasserman

Princeton University Press

This book, penned by Harvard business professor Noam Wasserman, details some of the most common challenges faced by new business owners. The author draws on more than 10 years of research and interviews, and reveals how some now well-known founders, such as Twitter's Evan Williams and Pandora's Tim Westergren, dealt with these all-too-familiar business problems.