

Avow Systems, Inc.

Top provider of secure electronic document solutions saves universities hundreds of thousands of dollars annually with Adobe® LiveCycle® ES solutions

Avow Systems, Inc.

www.avowsystems.com



Industry

Technology

Challenges

- Reduce the use of fraudulent educational documents
- Cut the cost associated with paper transcripts
- Lessen environmental impact
- Improve service to students and alumni

Solution

- Secure Document Delivery
Avow Systems is using Adobe Acrobat software and Adobe LiveCycle ES solutions to automate distribution of authenticated university transcripts.

Results

- Delivered authenticated transcripts digitally, mitigating the use of fraudulent materials
- Saved universities tens to hundreds of thousands of dollars annually by reducing administration and paper costs
- Improved environmental stewardship
- Accelerated transcript delivery by as much as 95%

Growing use of fraudulent documents

With rising competition to be admitted to the finest universities and obtain the best jobs, creation of fraudulent university transcripts and diplomas has burgeoned into a multi-million dollar industry—not to mention a major problem for higher education institutions. Faced with the reality that anyone with a credit card can find a source to generate a university diploma and transcripts, higher education institutions are focused now more than ever on how to stop the flow of fraudulent documents.

Uncertain of how to address the problem, most institutions have continued to print and mail transcripts and other materials to designated recipients in sealed envelopes, at a high cost. Depending upon the size of the university, the expense of printing, managing, and mailing documents can be hundreds of thousands of dollars annually.

Printing and mailing multi-page transcripts also can hinder a university's green mandates, while doing little to enhance student and alumni services. For example, traditional transcript requests can take a week or longer to fulfill. Moreover, the use of paper-copy materials and sealed envelopes has not mitigated the basic problem: the creation and distribution of fabricated documents.

“Colleges and universities today have been looking for ways to generate and deliver digitally certified transcripts to designated recipients, without jeopardizing the integrity of information,” says Ron Hyman, general manager at Avow Systems, a provider of solutions for secure electronic document processing. “At the same time, universities need to deliver materials to meet standards of branding and quality, and provide recipients with the assurance that the digital documents are authentic and easily accessible.”

Authenticated electronic documents

Using Adobe LiveCycle ES (Enterprise Suite) solutions, including Adobe LiveCycle Digital Signatures ES and LiveCycle Rights Management ES, Avow Systems provides higher education institutions with a hosted service that enables them to deliver certified documents in Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF). Avow's comprehensive service offerings—available via the company's Authentic Document Delivery Service (+ADDs™)—help universities cost-effectively deliver more secure, reliable electronic documents. Avow based +ADDs on Adobe LiveCycle ES solutions due to the ubiquity of free Adobe Reader® software, which allows universities to reach intended recipients with ease and helps ensure universal accessibility and acceptance of the digital transcript service.

“We didn't seriously consider anything other than Adobe LiveCycle ES due to the ubiquitous nature of the Adobe Reader software, and the fact that document authentication in Adobe Reader is free,” says Hyman. “With the ubiquity of free Adobe Reader, our clients' digital documents can be easily authenticated.”

Using Adobe LiveCycle Digital Signatures ES and LiveCycle Rights Management ES, Avow Systems provides higher education institutions with a hosted service that enables them to securely deliver digitally certified transcripts to designated recipients in Adobe PDF.



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At the heart of +ADDS is Certified Document Services (CDS), a document integrity program developed by Adobe. CDS allows document authors to create Adobe PDF files that automatically certify to the recipient that the author's identity has been verified by a trusted organization such as VeriSign and GlobalSign—Adobe CDS providers—and that the document has not been altered in any way. Anyone using Adobe Reader or Adobe Acrobat® version 6 or later software can take advantage of CDS.

A turnkey solution

+ADDS is a complete turnkey solution and can be implemented in a matter of days. Using Adobe LiveCycle Digital Signatures ES, Avow creates a unique digital signature for each client. In addition, the company uses Adobe LiveCycle Rights Management ES to apply specific controls to documents based on a university's requirements. For instance, some schools might not permit transcripts to be printed, while others might opt to assign time limits to control how long recipients can view transcripts. The combination of the two Adobe LiveCycle ES solutions provides universities with the quality, reliability, and control they need to deliver transcripts digitally.

Universities and colleges using the Avow service can further tailor the offering. Some universities may use existing online transcript request services for back-end processing to generate a transcript in Adobe PDF that is then delivered to Avow for a digital signature and assigned access controls. In other cases, Avow provides an end-to-end solution for universities, handling everything from transcript orders to document generation and delivery of certified transcripts.

Currently, Avow is working with Stanford University, University of Southern California, Penn State, University of Chicago, DePaul University, University of Colorado, and many other leading universities to generate and deliver certified transcripts to designated recipients. While the most common document type today is official transcripts, the service supports other education documents including financial letters, acceptance letters, report cards, and other confidential materials.

Systems At A Glance

- Adobe Acrobat Pro
- Adobe LiveCycle ES (Enterprise Suite). Components used include:
 - Adobe LiveCycle Digital Signatures ES
 - Adobe LiveCycle Rights Management ES

For More Information

www.adobe.com/products/lifecycle/
www.adobe.com/security/

+ADDS is having a major impact on how universities distribute documents such as transcripts. By eliminating paper and administrative costs associated with delivering transcripts, universities can save hundreds of thousands of dollars annually, depending on size of university. Transcripts can be delivered in a matter of minutes versus a week or longer with paper-based systems, making delivery as much as 95% faster.

“+ADDS based on Adobe LiveCycle ES has greatly enhanced services to our current students and alumni requesting official transcripts—all while reducing our costs. As our orders are completely automated, our productivity has dramatically increased,” says Corey Wahl, assistant registrar for the University of Colorado.

Good for the environment and for the bottom line

+ADDS is also helping universities improve environmental stewardship by reducing the volume of transcripts printed and mailed on paper. Currently, Avow Systems is automating the generation and delivery of more than 120,000 transcripts annually and is continuing to see increasing demand from organizations of all sizes.

“Transitioning to electronic transcripts represents quite a culture shift for students, staff, and faculty, so we never dreamed that the electronic transcript would take off the way it did,” says Susan Leigh associate vice president, Enrollment Management and Marketing at DePaul University. “Now in just six months, we have seen an impressive adoption rate of the transcripts we produce in electronic format, and that number is growing rapidly.”



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