

City of Barcelona

A paperless city

Barcelona city architects, engineers, and municipal engineers rely on Adobe® Acrobat® software to review permit requests electronically and reduce processing time



City of Barcelona
Barcelona, Spain
www.bcn.cat

The Municipal Institute of Information Technology of Barcelona (IMI) is the autonomous agency of the city of Barcelona tasked with supplying computer and telecommunications services to the city council and agencies, as well as to public enterprises. The IMI executes strategic projects that define the leadership and direction of communications and information systems.

One of the most ambitious projects driven by the City of Barcelona is eObras, a full digital system for managing and maintaining electronic records of building permits. The system incorporates a business process management (BPM) system for processing records and a new way to manage the necessary technical documents associated with granting building permits. Adobe Acrobat software enables employees to analyze the proposed work for each project completely electronically, without the need for paper planning documents.

With the new solution, municipal technical staff can perform measurements and make notes on project documents electronically, eliminating the need for paper documentation. To do this, it was necessary to incorporate images, such as maps, previously provided on paper into the system for easy on-screen viewing. Municipal officials say the adoption of this new technology has been a significant upgrade, enabling electronic management of the entire process, including technical analysis and storing of drawings associated with proposed work.

Increased automation and efficiency

Before implementing this technology, local architects carried out daily tasks such as viewing documentation, annotating, taking precise measurements, refining, and correcting drawings and documents manually. The annual volume of license applications for municipal works represented 45% of all municipal communications related to licensing.

"We needed a technology that would allow us to unify support for digital media control, such as monitoring and reviewing written and graphic municipal works," said Miquel Garcia, acting director of Urban Action Services of the City of Barcelona. "We needed to enable editing of a range of project documents, from plans to reports and addendums." It was also a requirement for the solution to be easy to use and adaptable for professionals with diverse experience in the use of technology.

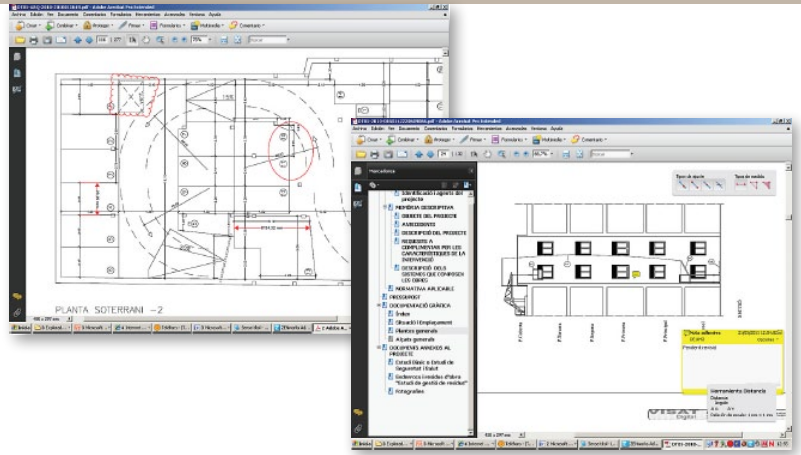
In addition, before the introduction of Adobe Acrobat, various municipal technical teams worked on different copies of a non-standard file formats. The old process required citizens and architectural and engineering offices to personally deliver paper copy files to municipal offices. With the implementation of eObras, work processes and methodologies have been streamlined, gaining time and efficiency and virtually eliminating a traditionally manual process in favor of a digital workflow.

The City of Barcelona's analysis concluded that Adobe Acrobat offered the solution that best suited its needs. Additionally, one of the deciding factors was the fact that professionals and colleagues were already using PDF for electronic document review, a key part in the process because it avoids the need for personal delivery of paperwork to submit a request. The capabilities of Adobe Acrobat satisfy the requirements for the technical teams of Urban Action and Municipal Districts, offering a digital solution that enables user to view and edit a large variety of documents. Additionally, it helps standardize file data and facilitate the generation of the final document.

With Adobe Acrobat, municipal technicians can annotate, review, comment, and edit projects plans and files directly on screen.

"Our Acrobat solution has resulted in a revolution and drastic change in an environment dominated by paper. Now we can fully process a municipal license for work without a single sheet of paper."

Miquel Garcia
Acting director, Urban Action Services
City of Barcelona



Challenge

- Digitally manage 100% of municipal licensing documentation
- Enable measurement of plans to scale as well as electronic review and annotation

Solution

- Use Adobe Acrobat to generate 100% electronic files and enable employees to comment, annotate, edit, and draw on technical project documentation

Benefits

- Virtually eliminated the use of paper and manual creation of permit requests
- Streamlined permit request review process
- Compiled all permit request information into a single digital file for more efficient management
- Expedited the processing of municipal records for building permits and public works activities

Toolkit

Adobe Acrobat

For more information

www.adobe.com/products/acrobat

For Jordi Roger, an architect at Urban Action Services who was involved in the launch of the project, one favorable aspect of adopting Adobe Acrobat was its easy integration with the visual project viewing system. Ease of use was also key. "Adobe Acrobat is an affordable tool and it has the features necessary to measure a plan to scale," he says.

For the acting director of the Urban Action Services, Miquel Garcia, the solution represents great time savings and includes data order in large projects. Adobe Acrobat is a daily work resource for at least 200 professionals at the City of Barcelona and provides additional performance improvements for up to 550 people. "Our Acrobat solution has resulted in a revolution and drastic change in an environment dominated by paper," says Garcia. "Now we can fully process a municipal license for work without a single sheet of paper."

Future projects

The city council's projection is that use of both the electronic system and Adobe Acrobat will be significant. Garcia supports the idea of developing customization for specific needs and requirements. Mainstreaming and integrating systems is one of the characteristics of the municipal building permit process. In the City of Barcelona, the draft dossier is electronically integrated with other municipal systems such as collections, electronic signatures, copying and security stamping, centralized notifications, and the processing portal. As such, the model change is based on an ordinance regulating municipal interventional procedures, which was just recently approved. 100% digital management of the application and licensing process is becoming a reality in the City of Barcelona.



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