

Young Conaway Stargatt & Taylor, LLP

## Improving operations

Technology-savvy law firm improves operations, safeguards sensitive content, and builds stronger cases using Adobe® Acrobat® software



Young Conaway  
Stargatt & Taylor, LLP  
Wilmington, Delaware  
[www.ycst.com](http://www.ycst.com)

Law firms today face the same pressures as businesses everywhere: reduce costs, boost staff productivity, and improve service levels to compete for clients more effectively. Also, for many firms, that is just the beginning of the list of challenges. By its very nature, the practice of law is complex, typically involving large volumes of information and extensive collaboration among parties. This means firms not only have to rethink how they work internally, but also how they address the needs of clients, outside counsel, courts, and others.

"We are constantly challenged to get increasingly complex information out to more audiences, without jeopardizing the integrity and security of that information," explains Margaret M. DiBianca, an associate at the Delaware-based law firm of Young Conaway Stargatt & Taylor, LLP. "Evidence needs to be collected, reviewed, and shared, and every step in a proceeding has to be documented. Fortunately, there have been tremendous advances in technology, yet it is surprising that lawyers and legal staff still attempt to manage processes on paper."

As a highly respected firm with 118 attorneys, Young Conaway serves a diverse range of clients, including national and international companies, as well as local businesses and individuals. The scope of the firm's practice is broad and encompasses corporate litigation, special entity creation, employment, real estate and land use, tax and estate planning, and more.

"We're always looking to improve operations, better serve clients, and gain a competitive advantage in the legal market," says DiBianca, who, in addition to her role as an attorney, also serves on the firm's technology committee. "We had been using Adobe Acrobat software for several years, but recent advances in the software have revolutionized our practice."

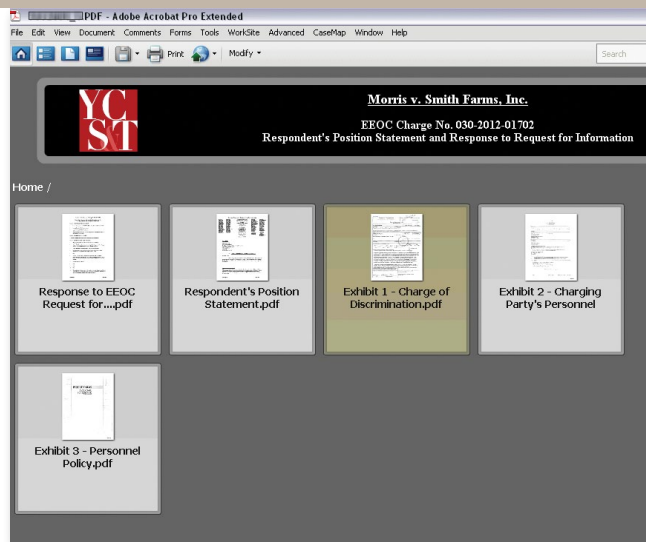
### Enhanced collaboration and control over documents

Young Conaway initially adopted Adobe Acrobat software to convert documents to Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) for electronic submission to the federal court, which implemented its mandatory electronic filing (eFiling) initiative in 2005. Today, the use of Acrobat software has grown to support many of the firm's most basic and strategic activities.

For DiBianca, other attorneys, and legal staff, it became evident that the benefits of Acrobat extended far beyond eFiling. "Lawyers must always be concerned about someone changing information that is sent out," says DiBianca. "By converting case materials to Adobe PDF and then locking down the files, legal documents retain an author's original intent, no matter who views them. With PDF, there is no worry about someone altering content and changing the meaning of our documents."

This level of protection is essential for lawyers who must safeguard against the disclosure of client information. In addition, government regulations, such as those outlined in the Gramm-Leach Bliley Act, and rules of court require that confidential personal information—names of minors, financial information, health records, social security numbers, and other details—remain protected at all times.

Young Conaway initially adopted Adobe Acrobat software and Adobe PDF for electronic submission of documents to the federal court. The use of Acrobat software now supports many of the firm's most basic and strategic activities, from delivering presentations or case materials in secure Adobe PDF files, to redacting sensitive case information and applying passwords and digital signatures to limit access to documents and information contained within them.



### Challenge

- Protect case documents
- Simplify delivery of case materials
- Accelerate access to critical case information

### Solution

- PDF Portfolios
- Digital signatures
- eFiling

Young Conaway Stargatt & Taylor is using Adobe Acrobat to create, review, and manage case documents as secure, platform- and application-independent Adobe PDF files.

### Benefits

- Boosted administrative productivity by as much as 20%
- Safeguarded confidential case information
- Strengthened cases by delivering high-quality, rich documents in PDF Portfolios
- Reduced time to build research portfolios from days to hours

### Toolkit

Adobe Acrobat Pro  
Adobe Acrobat Standard

Using Acrobat, Young Conaway's staff can go beyond the preservation of confidentiality. They can redact sensitive case information quickly and apply passwords and digital signatures to documents for added security. "We need to control who accesses documents and give people the assurance that the materials they receive have not been altered," explains DiBianca. "With Acrobat, we can put controls on PDF files to limit access to information and restrict copying of data from files."

Also useful for the firm and its partners is that recipients of case documents in Adobe PDF can add digital comments directly to materials, without changing underlying content. When dealing with complex, multi-page documents that are shared across teams, having the flexibility to make clear, legible comments on materials is invaluable.

### Automated processes boost productivity and services

Young Conaway is a leader in leveraging technology to improve its practices. In the Employment Law department, many attorneys, including DiBianca, have substantially reduced or eliminated the use of paper files. Instead, they review, share, and manage documents in Adobe PDF on the firm's Interwoven content management system.

"The optical character recognition (OCR) capabilities in Acrobat Pro enable us to effectively handle the large volume of paper we still receive," says DiBianca. "Within minutes, an assistant can scan paper documents and convert them to searchable Adobe PDF files. Previously, someone might have spent hours assembling case documents. By converting everything to PDF, staff now can find and assemble materials in seconds."

DiBianca estimates that paralegals and other support staff who regularly use Acrobat software save as much as two hours a day just by reducing the time spent searching for information and managing documents.

### Gaining an edge over competing counsel

Young Conaway also is taking advantage of PDF Portfolio creation in Acrobat to support improved collaboration and information sharing across legal teams and with outside providers. "With a few simple tools, we can greatly enhance the quality and effectiveness of the case materials we assemble," says DiBianca.

Already, the firm is using PDF Portfolios to improve the organization and appearance of many types of assembled case materials, including court submissions, research documents, and materials for clients and co-counsel. "The PDF Portfolios not only look great and are much easier to manage, but they also accelerate case review by simplifying searching through complex details," says DiBianca.

Lawyers at Young Conaway are taking advantage of PDF Portfolios to assemble documents submitted to administrative agencies as well as case materials, court submissions, and research documents provided to clients and co-counsel. The use of PDF Portfolios streamlines assembly of hundreds of documents in multiple file formats into a single, searchable package.



*"The application addresses so many of our business needs—from securing case documents to packaging materials in dynamic PDF Portfolios to automating forms processes. It is phenomenal."*

Margaret DiBianca  
Associate,  
Young Conaway  
Stargatt & Taylor, LLP

**For more information**  
[www.adobe.com/products/acrobat](http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat)

The firm has found a range of uses for PDF Portfolios. Lawyers in the Land Use Department rely on PDF Portfolios to manage complex transaction documents, which are typically lengthy and contain images and documents in multiple formats, all of which can be organized more easily in PDF. The final product reflects the sophisticated nature of the practice and promotes a professional image consistent with the high standards clients expect from the firm.

The firm's use of PDF Portfolios has also transformed legal research by streamlining the assembly of hundreds of cases, statutes, and other documents into a single, portable package that can include native Microsoft Word and Excel files. Rather than spending days printing and assembling paper research, lawyers working on a case can build a PDF Portfolio within hours. From that single portfolio, attorneys and co-counsel can search for content, highlight useful materials, and save remarks for fast future reference and easy collaboration.

In certain cases, the firm is also taking advantage of multimedia support in Acrobat to create PDF Portfolios that contain video. "Recently, we were able to capture a video from an adversary's website and save the video in PDF," says DiBianca. "Soon after, the website was taken down. Without Acrobat, we would not have been able to preserve what turned out to be an important piece of evidence. There is no other technology that would have let me do this as quickly and effectively."

### **Efficiencies realized across the firm**

For Young Conaway, the advantages of Adobe Acrobat are evident across the firm's everyday operations. Managers in Human Resources, Finance, and other groups are posting Adobe PDF forms to the firm's intranet or e-mailing them to distribution lists, so staff can quickly complete and submit vacation requests, product orders, and other form-based requests.

Created with Acrobat Standard, the administrative PDF forms include built-in mechanisms for tracking who has returned forms. Data on completed PDF forms can be captured and exported directly to spreadsheets for rapid reporting and analysis, which is also useful.

"Acrobat is an incredibly versatile and powerful tool," says DiBianca. "The application addresses so many of our business needs—from securing case documents to packaging materials in dynamic PDF Portfolios to automating forms processes. It is phenomenal."