



AANB MOVES TO DIGITAL SIGNATURES

Transition begins April 1st, 2019

As its October 18th, 2018 meeting, AANB Council decided members will begin the transition to using digital signatures (digital seals)¹ as of April 1, 2019.

Specific transition details:

- *This option will initially be voluntary for existing seal holders who wish to continue to use the manual seal issued by the AANB*
- *The digital signature issued by AANB through Notarius is **mandatory** for those who work in electronic format - that is, **no other option will be allowed** for architects who wish to finalize documents in electronic format (such as for example affixing an image of the physical seal on a document) after the launch date of April 1;*
- *The digital seal will be mandatory for anyone making a new application.*

The AANB intends to determine the date on which the measure will be mandatory for all. With this in mind AANB will be the sole issuer of the digital signature (digital seal) and this service will be provided through Notarius a certification authority. Members will be informed in advance.

The move to a digital seal comes as some authorities having jurisdiction (AHJs) have adopted the requirement, and many more begin to explore the possibility. It helps protect the general public in making certain all seals are from AANB members in good standing. Further, digital seals include a certified timestamp that may be useful for members in the context of potential litigation and copyright protection.

What Do Architects Need to Know About Digital Seals?

Architects are increasingly using new technologies in their daily work. The documents they produce remain subject to high standards of reliability.

To produce legally reliable documents in accordance with the AANB requirements, architects will use a digital signature(ds) of the AANB, technically known as the " CertifiO for professionals - Digital Signature of the Architects' Association of New Brunswick".

Digital seals should not be confused with a digital image or scanned image of a manual seal.

What is a Digital Signature certificate?

A digital signature certificate is a computer artifact issued and cryptographically protected by an authority (i.e. Notarius) attesting to the veracity of the information. This information may include:

- *Full name;*
- *Email address;*
- *Professional title;*
- *Membership number;*
- *Public key;*
- *Validity period and the serial number of their certificate.*

¹ A Digital Seal is a Digital Signature. When dealing with professional associations that use physical stamps, such as AANB, NOTARIUS uses, instead of Digital Signature, the term "Digital Seal" to echo the reality of AANB Members as the equivalent of using a physical stamp.

What is a Digital Signature?

A digital signature involves affixing of this certificate, which cryptographically secures an electronic file to prove the origin and authenticity of the signer, confirming the integrity of the document.

Features and benefits

By affixing the AANB Digital Seal to a document, an AANB member:

- Guarantees the **identity** of the document – the origin of the document includes proof of the signer's identity, their AANB professional affiliation (at the time of the signature) as well as the date and time of the document's finalization;
- Ensures the **integrity** of the document (as well as its contents), so that the document has not been altered since its completion;
- Establishes the **authenticity** of the document – everything necessary to prove its origin and integrity is embedded in the document; and
- Ensures the **longevity** of the document providing the ability to open, read, authenticate and preserve the reliability of a document over time.

The AANB Digital Seal must remain under the sole control of its holder; it cannot be shared or delegated under any circumstances.

The partnership between the AANB and Notarius

Notarius is partnering with the AANB to provide the technological framework and platform to issue a digital signature to its membership, without the expense and issues related to managing the technological infrastructure related to such complex solutions. In the same way AANB controls the issuance of the manual seal, this partnership allows the Association to be exclusive issuer of the digital seal (i.e. any other version of the AANB electronic seal will no longer be permitted after the April 1st launch date).