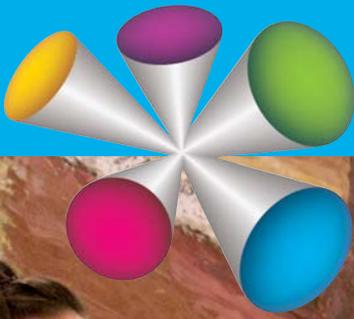


Cost-cutting

Spanish savings banks incorporate Wacom signature tablets, cutting costs and helping to protect the environment.





Wacom STU-500 at CECA, Spain

Until recently, customers of banks and savings banks were obliged to repeat their signature on hundreds of different documents. All transactions, however small, used to involve endless document signature. Now this can be avoided thanks to the signature solution that Wacom, Softpro and the Confederation of Spanish Saving Banks decided to introduce and deploy.

They had three very clear objectives in mind. Firstly, to save direct costs associated with documents generated by banking transactions. Secondly, to convert the digitalized signature into standard practice in the banking world and even in other sectors. And finally, to achieve greater convenience for employees and customers. Transfers, current account contracts, credit cards, loan agreements, cash receipts... All of these very typical bank and savings bank transactions used to involve a series of signatures on various paper documents, written by customers and employees in every branch. Similarly, all these documents gave rise to direct costs generated by paper and printing and indirect costs generated by the processing and archiving of each and every document. This is why the Confederation of Spanish Savings Banks (CECA) has decided to implement a project of Digital Signature System (DSS) in Spanish savings banks. In order to do this, they have selected various digitalizing tablets that capture digitalized signature, and between them, the STU-500, Wacom's signature tablet. According to Santiago Uriel, CECA Technology Vice-Secretary, roll-out of this project will involve an average direct saving of three euro cents for each paper document that no longer requires processing. This may not seem much at first glance, but when multiplied by the number of documents handled by a single branch in a year (averaging approximately 40,000) it renders a potential saving of €30,000,000 annually across all Spanish savings banks. And this figure only takes into account direct costs (paper and printer ink), because the indirect costs related to archiving, processing and transport are so high that, according to Uriel, they have not even dared to calculate them.

The project comes from another European savings bank, specifically, Berliner Sparkasse in Germany, which has indeed dared to estimate the total saving involved. According to the German savings bank, the average total saving amounts to no less than €1.5 for each document that no longer requires processing. This being so, it is no surprise that CECA should have decided to introduce the project following completion of relevant legal studies. However, the ultimate objective of this plan is none other than to convert the digitalized signature into an industry standard in the world of banking and

finance. Although it is clear that the resulting additional improvements (greater convenience for customers, employees and auditors; contribution to protection of the environment thanks to reduced use of paper and ink and, of course, significant cost reduction) all contributed to make the project even more attractive.

Following the development of software compatible with the specific protocols of each savings bank and having carried out a successful pilot project, managers at CECA realized that customer acceptance of the system was total as was employee satisfaction. This is why, at the present time, most of the CECA savings banks are immersed in the task of adapting to the new system. Of the 45 existing savings banks in Spain, 16 already rolled out the project in some or all their branches. Nowadays there are more than 1,500 branches in adaptation, almost 10,000 tablets installed and more than 5 million transactions signed digitally. It is anticipated that the tablets will be fully operational in more than 3,000 branches by 2009.

In addition to the Wacom and Softpro solution, CECA considered other possibilities with regard to the hardware used to implement this project. However, most of the tablets to be installed will be the Wacom STU-500 variety, for two main reasons: price and functionality. In terms of price, CECA functions as the purchase centre for all the savings banks when it comes to acquiring tablets from Wacom and Softpro. With regard to functionality, to quote Santiago Uriel: "the quality of the STU-500, its functionalities and the quality of biometric data that it captures, comply perfectly with the requirements established for the signature solution. And for us, biometric data quality is fundamental if, at any given time, we need to demonstrate that someone has signed a specific document with the STU-500". For that reason, he stresses: "The Wacom STU-500 is able to capture movements even when the pen is suspended above the screen without touching it. Other tablets cannot do this, even though it is differential for subsequent recognition of a signature when the need arises". Uriel also mentions the design of the STU-500 as another point in its favour, as it is more attractive and elegant, in ergonomic terms, than other similar devices.

Spanish savings banks have opted for the Wacom LCD signature tablet because:



1. The quality of biometric data that it captures exceeds the minimum required, and it is very well positioned in the market attending to its quality / price ratio.
2. The savings banks save on both direct and indirect costs.
3. It contributes to protection of the environment, by using less paper and ink and by generating less waste.

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