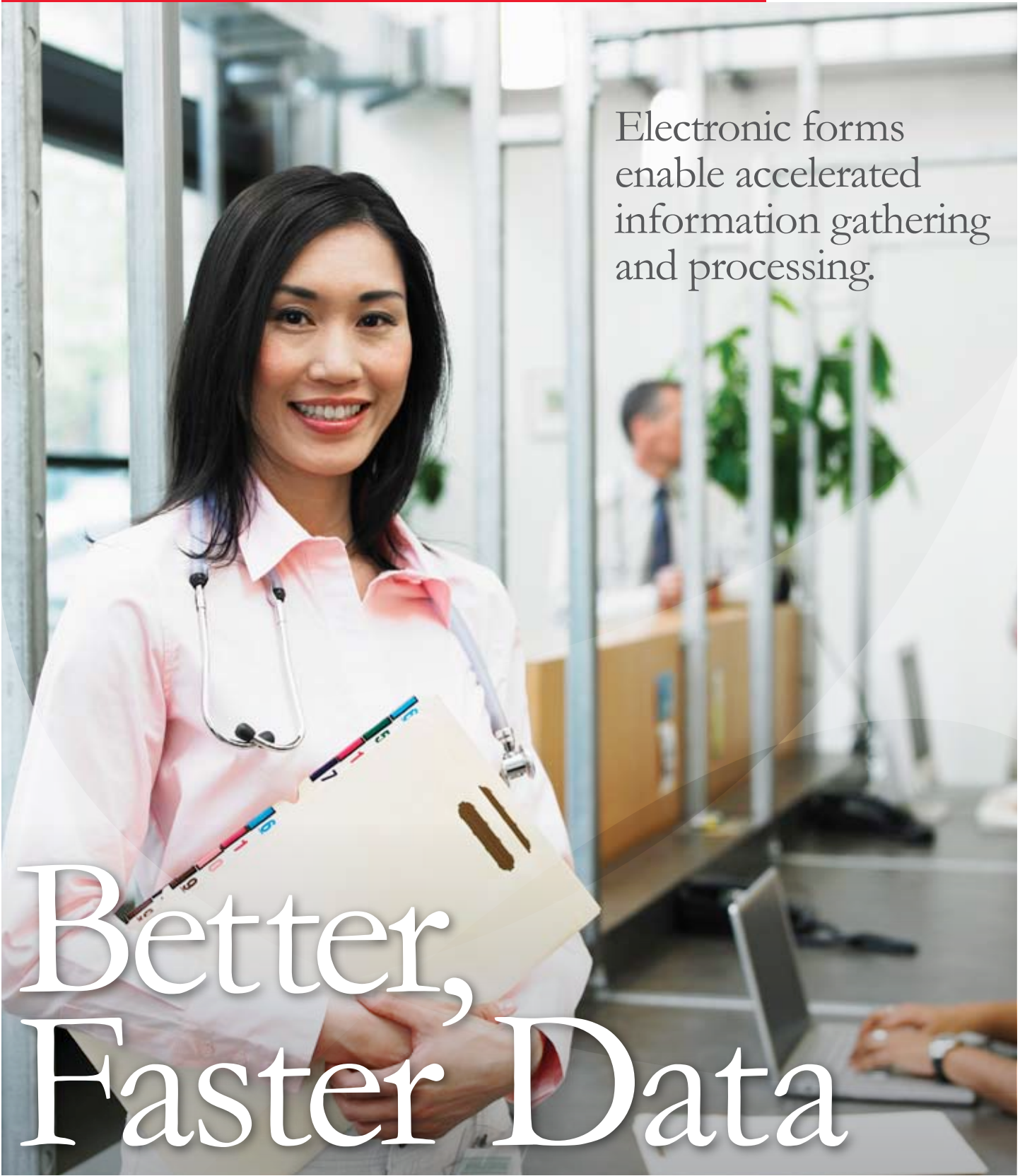


Electronic forms  
enable accelerated  
information gathering  
and processing.

# Better, Faster Data



# Fast-Forward

Workers' compensation claims are resolved much faster with electronic forms and streamlined processes.

When New York state announced the reform of its workers' compensation system in 2007, it didn't waste time getting started. By December 2008, the state released a report stating that with the reforms, benefits to injured workers increased for the first time in 15 years. Employers' costs decreased, fraud was reduced and workers' compensation claims were resolved more quickly.

In addition, the state estimates that by using electronic forms instead of paper, it will save \$6 million a year on scanning. These dramatic improvements were spurred by the 2007 Workers' Compensation Reform Act, which set numerous goals for the New York State Workers' Compensation Board — goals the board has been meeting ever since.

The board administers the workers' compensation system for the state. Under the board's direction, employers' insurance carriers pay weekly cash benefits and pay for medical care. The board receives and processes workers' claims for benefits, injury reports from employers, and medical reports from doctors and other health-care providers. In all, that's 8 million documents each year.

Forms filled out by employers, injured workers and doctors are a key part of the claims process. These forms set everything in motion and when they're not completed properly, it slows the entire process.

The Reform Act called for a form redesign, and the board was charged with creating new forms — including online versions



## What We Want

Government agencies constantly work to improve interactions with citizens and businesses. A common frustration for the public is filling out endless paper forms. Collecting information via forms is a critical part of many government services, but everyone, including citizens, businesses and government, wants dealing with paperwork to be an easier process.

With today's technologies, forms can be moved online and processing can be streamlined. This means simpler, faster service for the public and increased efficiency for government.

Many government agencies choose Adobe LiveCycle ES (Enterprise Suite) to automate forms-based processes. It's an integrated solution that streamlines the application process for both online and offline users. Features include data capture, data validation, process management, content services and document output. Data collected with forms is complete and accurate. Forms are secure, both at the starting point when completed by the user, and once they reach the government organization for processing.

LiveCycle ES also streamlines the development process. An organization can see many benefits behind the scenes, as forms-development cycles are shortened and integration to systems is simplified.

With LiveCycle ES, government agencies are able to focus on their mission instead of paperwork.

— that would be easier to use and collect more information. The assumption was that more data at the outset would speed the entire claims process — and it has.

The board selected Adobe LiveCycle ES (Enterprise Suite) software to achieve its goals. It created the forms using Adobe, and after three months of development, the electronic versions became available Jan. 1, 2009. The software gave the board an automated, Web-based solution that drastically hastened the process. Even the return on investment was quick — about two months.



### Speedier Processes for All

The new forms are longer and ask more questions than in the past — but they're also faster and easier to fill out. The electronic features from Adobe are a big improvement over the previous system. Doctors, for example, can now electronically save data from previous visits by a patient and create new templates populated with information that's entered often.

**“What we're trying to do now is extend the benefits we saw as a workers' compensation agency to the rest of the workers' comp system and allow others to take advantage of the electronic information exchange to the greatest extent possible.”**

*Joe Pennisi, executive director, New York State Workers' Compensation Board*

The doctors can use historical information to fill out forms for return visits and attach electronic notes. They also can save partially completed forms — something the previous system didn't allow.

With LiveCycle, doctors and their staffs spend less time filling out forms, but the board receives more information. And the system processes incoming forms much faster. Forms that used to take five days to find their way into a case folder now appear in one day. Thanks to customized validation, people fill out the forms properly and the board gets better data than in the past.

The software is also user-friendly for developers. The board's development team now has more flexibility in creating new forms and can generate them more quickly than before.

Several years ago, the board started working toward a more electronic process for its internal work. The goal was to reduce paper, and the changes allowed the board to be more efficient. The new electronic forms for doctors, workers and employers are expanding on that, said Joe Pennisi, executive director of the New York State Workers' Compensation Board. “What we're trying to do now is extend the benefits we saw as a workers' compensation agency to the rest of the workers' comp system and allow others to take advantage of the electronic information exchange to the greatest extent possible,” he said.

Before LiveCycle, 90 percent of medical reports came in on paper and each page had to be scanned. At 29 cents per page, the costs were significant, and the time it took to send the pages to the image-scanning company slowed the process. Many forms were incomplete, which further slowed the process.

### Happier Users

Part of the Reform Act focused on controverted claims — cases where the injured worker and employer disagree on whether the injury is work related. “One goal the governor and Legislature set for the board was to substantially shorten the amount of time it took the board to resolve a controverted claim,” said Pennisi. “Prior to reform, it took more than 200 days to resolve that kind of claim. Their charge to the board was to reduce that amount of time to less than 90 days.”

The board has already achieved that with the new forms. By collecting more data at the outset, there have been 42 percent

fewer controverted cases. With fewer disputed cases and faster resolution when they do occur, everyone wins.

“We want to make life easier for the participants — the injured worker, the injured worker's employer and particularly the medical providers, who are a very important part of our system,” said Pennisi. “We want to provide them options for submitting the forms to us electronically that really did not exist before.”

Part of the convenience for end-users is the ability to save forms for later use. “It really saves a lot of our customers' time,” said Paul DeBarbieri, the board's director of application

“You can bring up the form you’ve done before, change two or three fields, hit ‘submit’ and it saves a considerable amount of time.”

Paul DeBarbieri, director of application development, New York State Workers’ Compensation Board

development. “Very often, you have a person in a paper-based environment, and they’re putting the information into our Web-based solution. They have a stack of paper in front of them. They’re putting information in and they realize there is a piece of information that they don’t have. Without the ability to save to their own location, they will lose what they started.” That’s no longer the case with LiveCycle.

The feature helps users fill in oft-used forms more quickly. “You have a form that has 60 fields on it, and most of those don’t have to be touched at all. Certainly the service date will change, maybe the service type,” said DeBarbieri. “You can bring up the form you’ve done before, change two or three fields, hit ‘submit’ and it saves a considerable amount of time.”

### Development Gains Too

The board has to create forms that are accessible to those with disabilities. That takes extra work, but that too is easier with the new software. “We found it actually has features built right into it to help you do that, so it was easy,” said Valerie Perrotte, information technology specialist III for the board.

The current forms are much more flexible when it comes to filling them out. There are no longer character limits, and whether the user needs to enter a lot of information or a little, the field will expand or shrink to the appropriate size. Billing information is listed in rows, with one row for each item to be billed. Whether the customer needs one row or many, the form reacts accordingly. “This will help you build those rows on the fly,” said Perrotte. “You won’t have extra rows in there that you haven’t used. It keeps the form more compact and more relevant.”

The system provides opportunities for faster, easier development of new forms. The board’s developers are creating



an improved form for injured workers. It will include numerous prompts to help people fill out the forms. The board is creating a new form for employers, which takes a wizard-based approach and guides users through the form screen-by-screen.

DeBarbieri and Perrotte said the board’s developers received valuable support from Adobe during the development process. They look forward to providing even more services in the future — for the benefit of everyone involved in the workers’ compensation process.



**Adobe**

For more information, visit  
[www.adobe.com/government](http://www.adobe.com/government).