

Guidance for Digital Informed Assent & Parental Permission for Minors

Please review the Human Participants Rules on p, 8 of the [2021 International Rules: Guidelines for Science & Engineering Fairs](#) for complete rules regarding projects involving human participants. This guidance helps to facilitate minors participating in human research using digital informed consent forms.

Participation in research may begin only after research participants have voluntarily given informed consent/assent (in some cases with parental permission). Adult research participants may give their own consent. Research participants under 18 years of age and/or individuals not able to give consent (e.g. developmentally disabled individuals) give their assent, with the parent/guardian providing permission. (p. 8, No. 4)

Permission for minors to participate in human research cannot be given through survey landing pages. Researchers are unable to distinguish whether the minor or parent is completing the fields.

In order to provide parental permission, the following must be provided to the minor and the parent: 1) **Human Informed Consent Form**, and 2) **A copy of any survey or questionnaire used**. The return of signed form by both the parent and the minor will allow the minor to participate.

Parental permission and minor assent can be obtained in two ways: **Sign, Scan, & Return** OR the use of **Electronic or Digital Signatures**.

Method 1: Sign, Scan, & Return

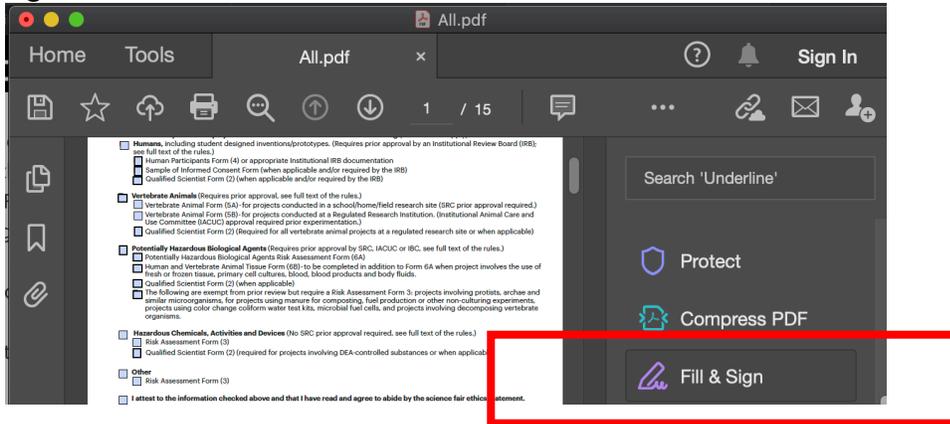
The **Human Informed Consent Form** can be sent electronically (most often via email) to prospective participants. The form can be printed, and then minors can provide their assent and parents provide their permission by signing the section of the form below. The form can then be scanned with a scanner or any other scanning app tool, including but not limited to, CamScanner, Office Lens, or Adobe Scan. The completed, signed form can be uploaded and electronically returned to the researcher.

Adult Informed Consent or Minor Assent (mm/dd/yy)	Date Reviewed & Signed: _____
_____	_____
Research Participant Printed Name:	Signature:
Parental/Guardian Permission (if applicable)	Date Reviewed & Signed: _____ (mm/dd/yy)
_____	_____
Parent/Guardian Printed Name:	Signature:

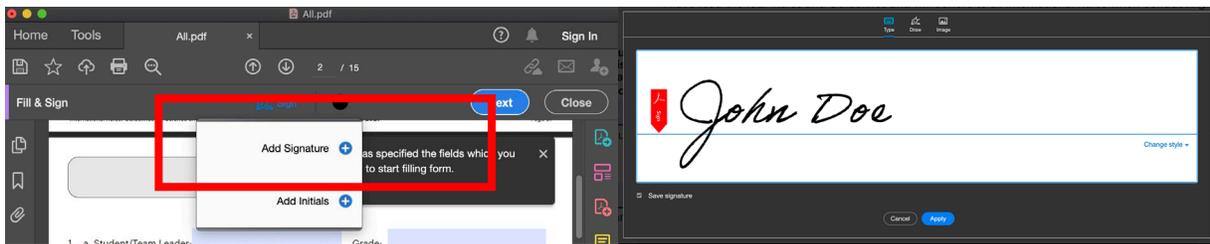
Method 2A: Electronic Signatures

Electronic signatures offer a digital way to provide permission for human research. Below is a suggested path for the most common PDF application: **Adobe Reader**

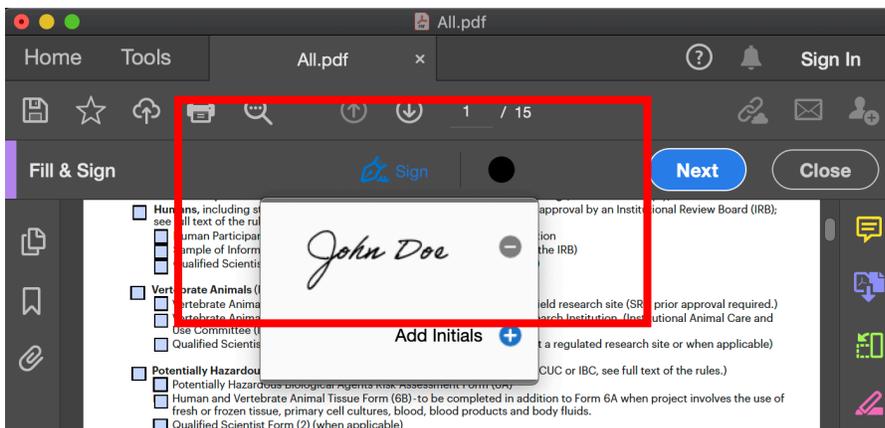
Clicking on “Fill & Sign” and then “Fill and Sign” again allows you to add an electronic signature.



Clicking the “+” of “Add Signature” allows you to make a **Type**, **Draw**, or **Upload an Image** of your signature.



Once finished, you can then stamp the signature wherever is necessary.



Please check out the walkthrough by “How-To Geek” on [How to Electronically Sign PDF Documents Without Printing and Scanning Them](#) for other software or devices.

Method 2B: Digital Signatures

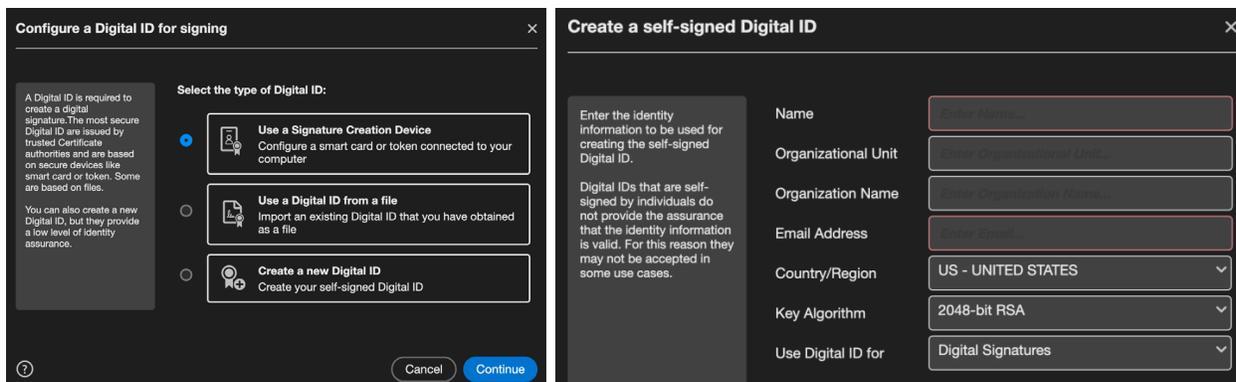
Digital signatures offer a more secure way to electronically sign files. These signatures can only occur in labeled fields by the PDF form creator.

Adult Informed Consent or Minor Assent (mm/dd/yy)	Date Reviewed & Signed:
Research Participant Printed Name:	Signature:
Parental/Guardian Permission (if applicable) (mm/dd/yy)	Date Reviewed & Signed:
Parent/Guardian Printed Name:	Signature:

When clicking to sign one of these fields, you need to include a Digital ID that is password protected and includes a timestamp.



Depending on which resources you have available to you, choose the appropriate ID option. You can also create your own self-signed digital ID.



You can choose that ID, and it will appear like this in your form. Upon selection, you'll be prompted to save the form as a new file. You can then send that file back to the researcher.

