

A Brief Practice Primer on Computer Legal Forms  
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There is one major practical difference in electronic legal forms and that is whether the form is locked or unlocked, also known as secure or unsecure. You can find most forms for free on the Internet in PDF secure format. All you need is free Adobe Reader software and you can open up a secure form and fill in the rather limited fields, however some of the really important boxes cannot be checked and must be done so by hand only after you have printed out your form. This really defeats the whole concept of using a computerized legal form because now you have to proof read each and every page printed out instead of proofing just one copy. You cannot save a filled out PDF form on your hard drive unless you have a licensed copy of Adobe Acrobat installed. I purchased Adobe Acrobat Standard on Amazon Marketplace for \$300. You can also try a similar PDF software program called Nitro, at less than a third of that price.

To repeat, in the free secure forms available on California Court websites and elsewhere, the size of the fillable fields is limited and you cannot change the font size. Also on the free forms some boxes and fields are not fillable at all on your computer. My theory is that this is a marketing technique to get you used to the ease of productivity in using semi-fillable free secure PDF forms so that you will eventually purchase unsecure and totally fillable PDF forms. This marketing technique worked great on me! It worked so good that in the same very expensive legal forms package I purchased the entire set of unsecure PDF forms *and* the same forms in unlocked Microsoft Word Document format. (You could only buy the Word documents if you also bought the PDF forms, talk about marketing techniques). The purchased PDF forms have all fields and boxes either editable and checkable, unlike the more limited free forms. Also in the unsecure paid PDF

forms you can change the font to a smaller size to fit in all of your information into the fields. Now you are using professional technology because you only have to proof read one copy of your document because no hand checking or editing is necessary as it is with the free forms. Productivity goes up, stress goes down, happiness is attained.

Now the upper echelon of legal competency is having all of your legal forms in totally editable, unlocked Microsoft Word .doc format which puts you in a whole new league and is heaven for a legal document assistant or paralegal. Speed and productivity go way up because PDF forms are slow and clunky compared to forms created from the ground up as Word Documents. Try and imagine the ease and comfort of having your entire legal form as a *completely* editable Word Document. After using “hard” PDF forms you have to be careful with the “soft” DOC forms because you can easily delete the boilerplate form language standard to both the PDF and Word formats if you are not careful. Your DOC forms run super fast just like any other Word Document and you can search them at lightning speed compared to PDF. Emailing the forms is also much faster, as is everything else, including the time you will be finished so you can go home faster.

You enter a brave new world where you never again have to use white out and a typewriter on the old SUM-100 form to make the summons on complaint double as a make shift summons on *cross-complaint*. You just go into your Word doc SUM-100 and make a clean and professional edit. Our work here at LegalNoodle.com actually looks better than a lot of work that comes out of expensive law offices because of these high end forms we use. (And the fact that our foundational word processing and other techno skills are higher than that of most). But the main reason people like LegalNoodle.com is that we are faster and more knowledgeable than other paralegals or law offices when it comes to the latest technology. We may charge just a little bit more than the other

guys, because we deliver a higher quality product to a more discerning client. People pay us to solve their problems and relieve the stress from their lives. LegalNoodle.com does this by doing things like having the right tools in the form of high end Judicial Council Forms in Microsoft Word format.