

## E-contract and E-mail, Two in One

Some readers may say: There is no relationship between the two, how can they be combined into one? Before answering this question, let's look at the current situation of the two. Electronic contracts are signed electronically, and emails are sent and received electronically. The left picture below shows a common sales contract format, and the right picture below shows a common email communication of contract terms. The writing format of the two is highly consistent, with Party A (recipient), Party B (sender), contract documents (email attachments), and signing time (email sending time). The only difference is that emails do not have a formal signing process with electronic contract seal or signature, and do not have a digital signature with timestamp for electronic contracts.

**Reseller Agreement**

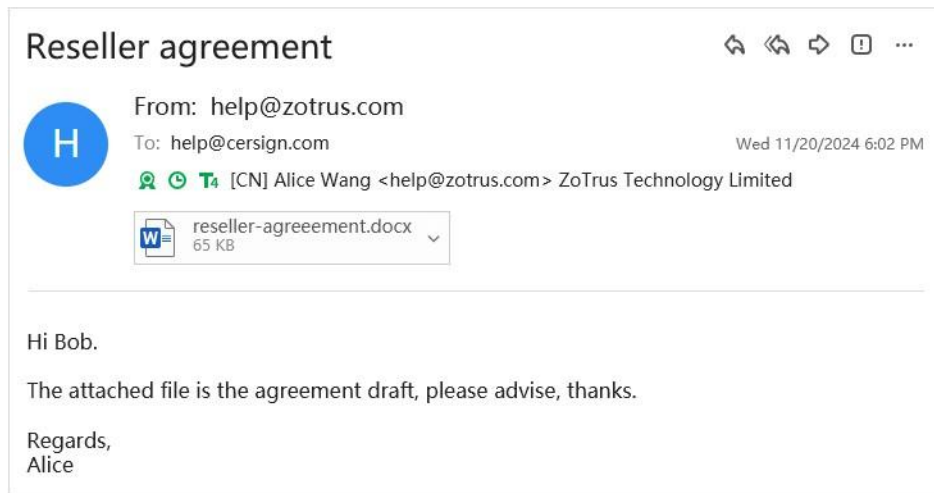
This Agreement, dated 11/20/2024, is .....

The body of the contract

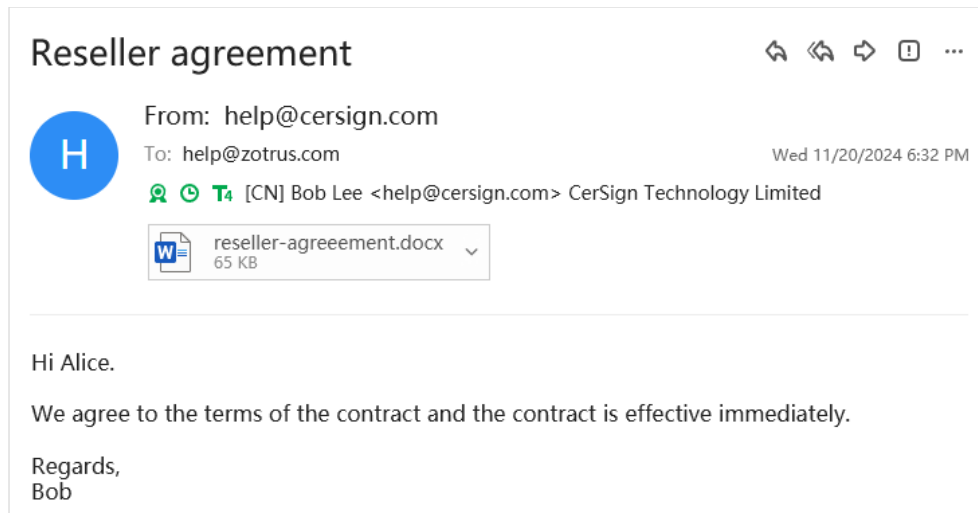
Party A: Party A Ltd.	Party B: Party B Ltd.
By: <u>Bob</u>	By: <u>Alice</u>
Name: <u>Bob</u>	Name: <u>Alice</u>



However, if the email has a digital signature and a timestamp during the sending and replying process, does it mean that the electronic contract has been signed? The following figure shows an email with a digital signature, timestamp and identity information sent by ZT Browser. According to the "Electronic Signature Law", this email is equivalent to Party B Alice having signed the contract attached to the email as a company employee, which is legally binding. In other words, sending an email with a digital signature and timestamp is equivalent to completing a valid contract signing. Isn't this simpler and more convenient than the commonly used electronic contract signing? Do you still think that e-contracts have nothing to do with emails?



The email above shows that Party B Alice has drafted a contract and sent it to Party A, and Alice agrees to all the terms. If Party A agrees to the terms of the contract after receiving the email, Bob only needs to reply with a digitally signed email or a digitally signed and encrypted email (strongly recommended, to ensure that the electronic contract file is encrypted and stored in a cloud mailbox) using ZT Browser, write that he agrees to the terms of the contract, and the contract will take effect immediately. Because this digitally signed email has all the conditions for the contract to take effect: both parties have trusted digital signatures, and the digital signatures have timestamps. As shown in the figure below.



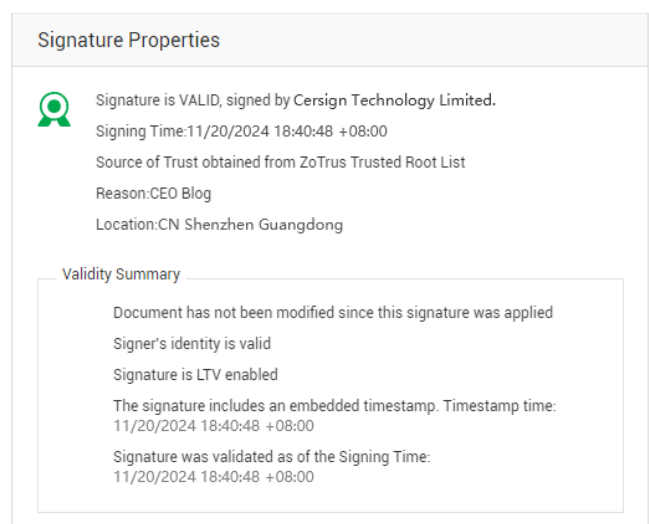
Of course, the legal effect is the entire digitally signed email, and if the contract file attached to the email is downloaded, it will have no legal effect because the Word file does not have a digital signature. To solve this problem, ZoTrus Technology has innovative solution again.

After receiving the email, Bob only needs to right-click on the attachment or click the drop-down arrow

behind the attachment, and the "Sign Contract" menu will be displayed. Click "Sign Contract" and ZT Browser will preview the PDF file to be signed. Bob only needs to locate the place for Party A's representative signature in the contract and click Sign to complete the contract signing. Of course, Bob can forward the email to other people who have the right to complete the signing.

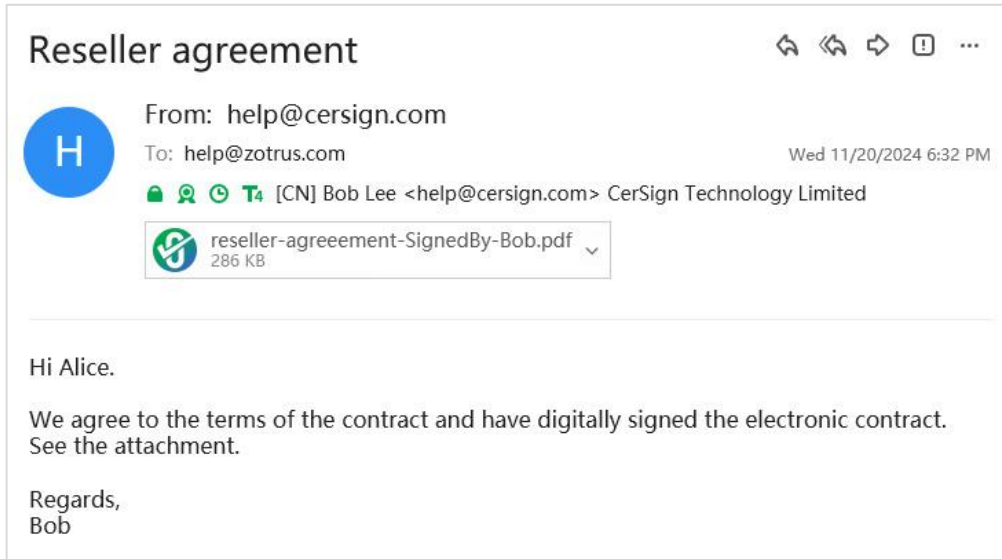


The actual effect of signed contract is shown in the left figure below. Clicking the e-contract seal will display the Signature Properties, including signature validity, signer's name, signature time (timestamp time), legal effect statement, contract signing location, long-term validity of the signature and other information, as shown in the right figure below.

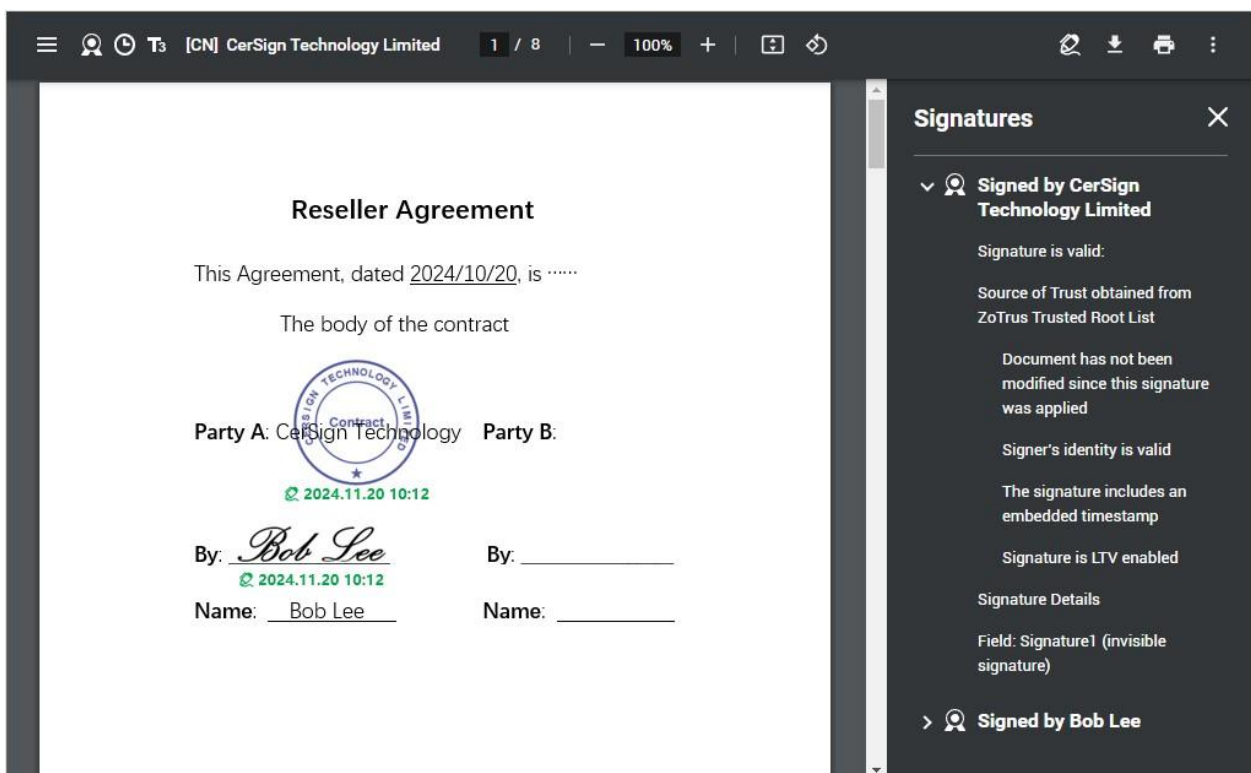


After signed, the signed contract file (PDF file) will be automatically attached to the email. The user only needs to click the send button to send the email to the other party. The email received by the other party will not only have a digital signature and timestamp, but the attached PDF file will have a digital

signature and timestamp. Both the email as a whole and the independent PDF file are legally binding, as shown in the figure below. Unlike the above email with only a digital signature, this time the attachment is no longer a Word file, but a PDF file digitally signed by Bob, which legal effect.



After receiving the signed contract document, Alice can directly click to view the signing status of the PDF file. ZT Browser will display the trusted identity information of the contract signer, as shown in the figure below. The signer identity information has been displayed in the ZT Browser document signature bar, and all signer information in this PDF file is displayed, as shown on the right side of the figure below. Alice can complete the digital signature of the PDF file like Bob done.



Now, everyone has understood that e-contract signing and email signature not only have the same process and same digital signature technology, the two can be completely combined into one, greatly simplifying the e-contract signing process. Users no longer need to negotiate the contract terms via email and then go to the e-contract signing platform to sign the contract. Contract signing can be done with one click when sending an email directly.

The innovative e-contract signing process of ZT Browser based on email circulation is not only completely free to use, but also does not require users to upload electronic contract files to the signing platform like traditional e-contract signing platforms. The e-contract files are only encrypted and saved in the user's own mailbox and the recipient's mailbox. The original contract is not disclosed to any third-party signing platforms, effectively protecting the security of the user's confidential contract information. Users manage their own contracts and keep them themselves just like the paper contract.

*Richard Wang*

**November 25, 2024  
In Shenzhen, China**

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Follow ZT Browser at X (Twitter) for more info.

The author has published 81 articles in English (more than 104K words) and 193 articles in Chinese (more than 553K characters in total).

