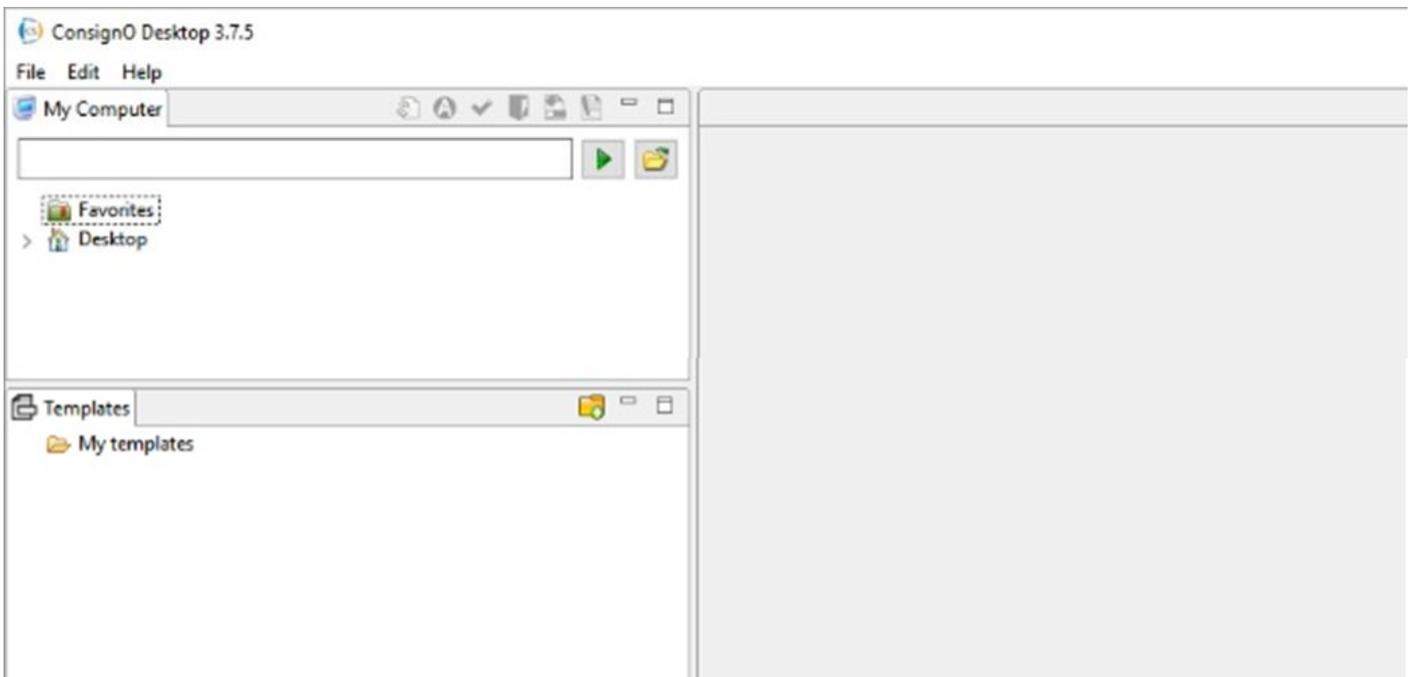


There has been considerable confusion regarding the use of electronic seals and their security on documents. In addition, there seems to be a lack of understanding of the use of Notarius software, and the difficulty associated with the application of signatures and seals.

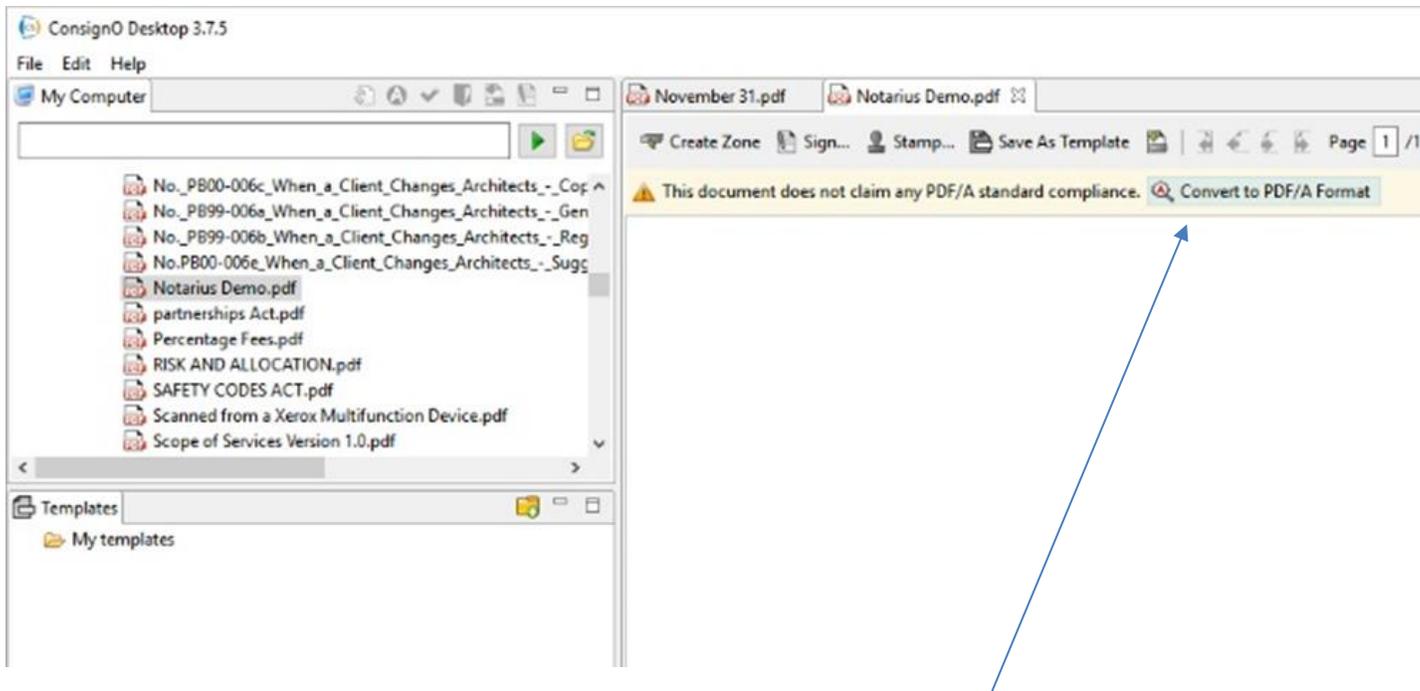
Simply put, Notarius allows you to digitally sign PDF documents securely. The security of identity is part of the verification system Notarius uses to connect you PERSONALLY to the program and the signatures and seals you will be using. This is one part of the security equation. The other is the PDF/A format. To quote Wikipedia: "PDF/A is an ISO-standardized version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) specialized for use in the archiving and long-term preservation of electronic documents." Notarius uses the PDF/A format to produce a PDF document of archival quality that cannot be altered.

The key to security is the direct connection to the person. When you subscribe to Notarius, your identity is verified DIRECTLY. You have a face-to-face secure video link to Notarius and you speak to a person that verifies your identity. During the interview, your picture is captured by Notarius. They then ask you to take a picture of a government issued identity document (most commonly a passport) with your smart phone and that is sent to them. They affix the image of your passport page with your interview photo, verify a few other pertinent facts, give you a password for the account, and the interview ends. The password is PERSONAL and is to be used ONLY BY YOU. You then wait for a few hours or perhaps a day to receive an approval for the use of Notarius from the Alberta Association of Architects. If you are registered in other jurisdictions, they will send separate approval emails. Once you have received that, you are all set to use the program.

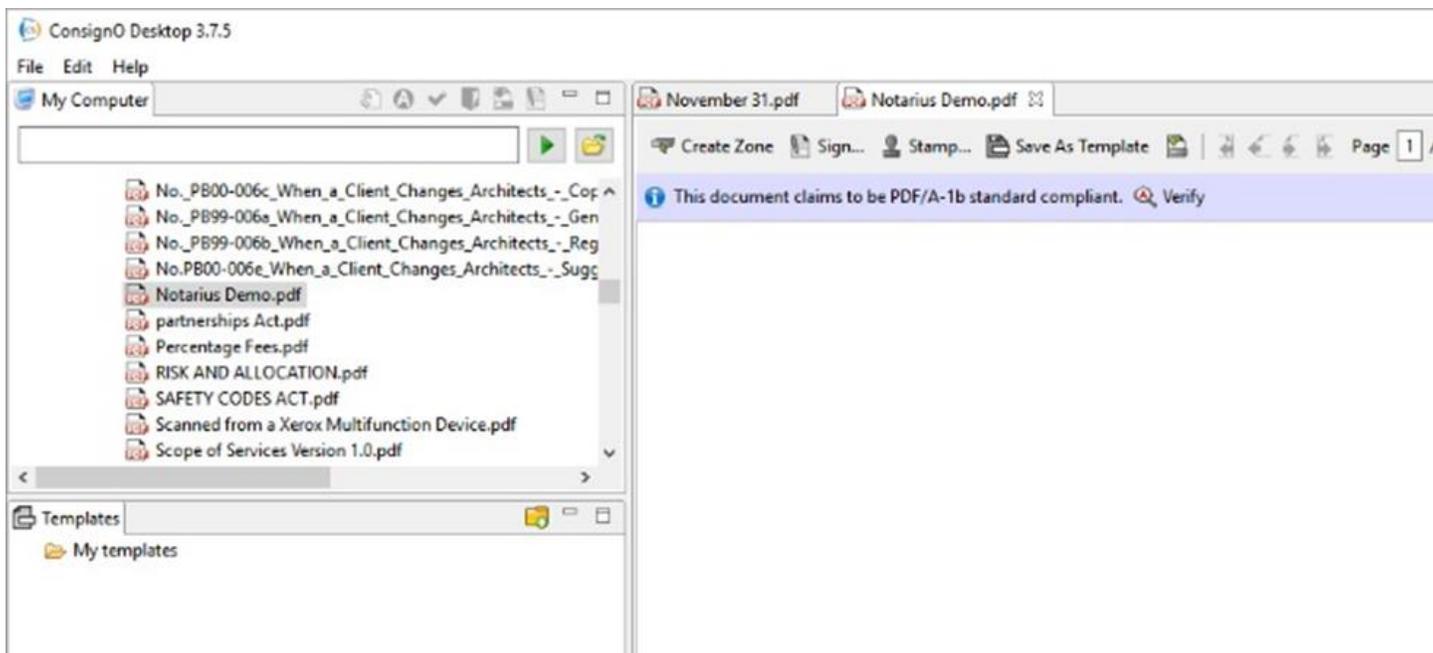
The program you use to actually sign and seal documents is marketed under the name "ConsignO". You start up that program and set up your signature and seals in the software. This involves taking high resolution photos of both the seal, the seal and signature, and just signature and uploading these to the software.



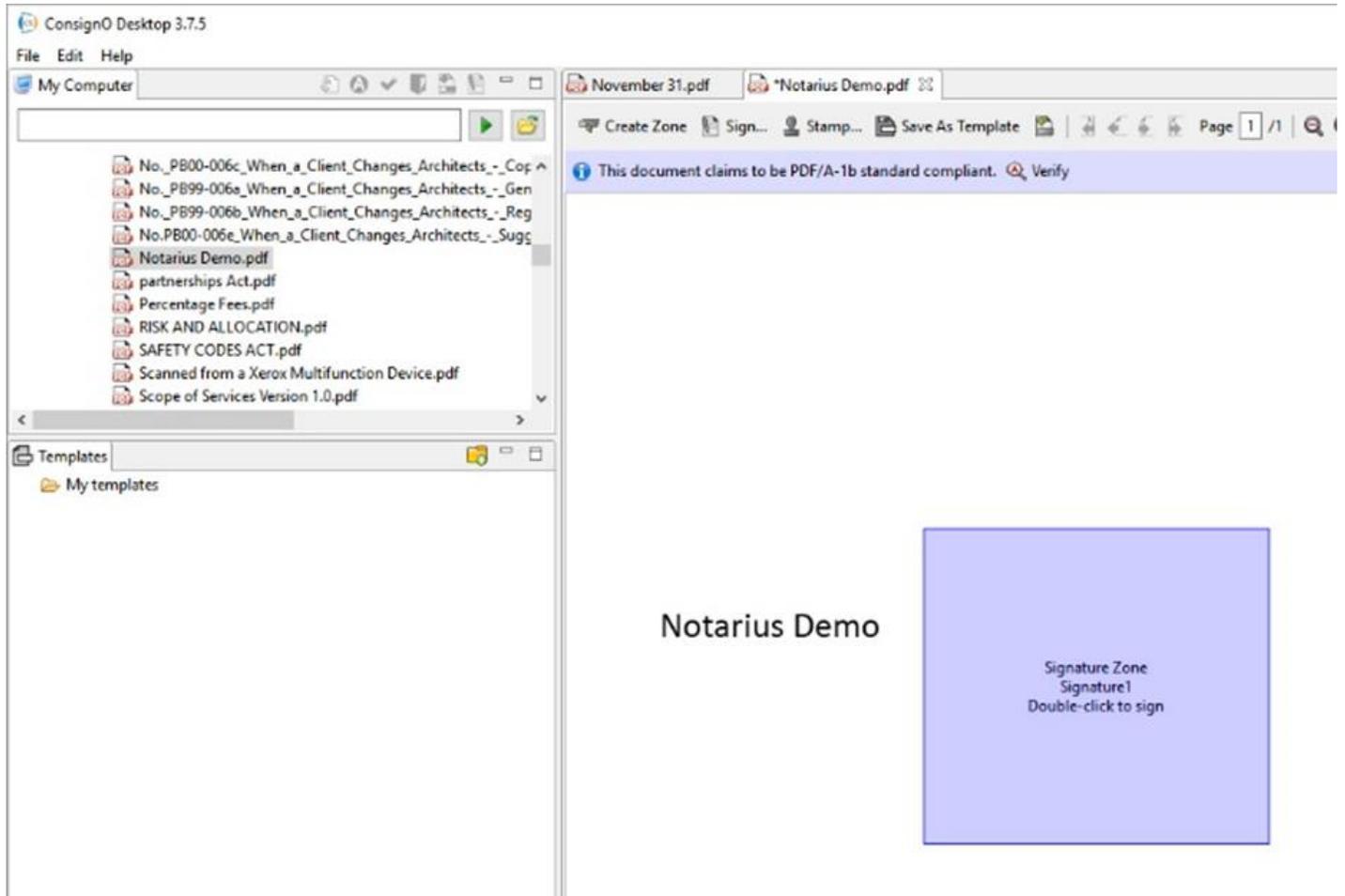
The next step is to open the document you wish to sign or seal from the navigation pane on the left.



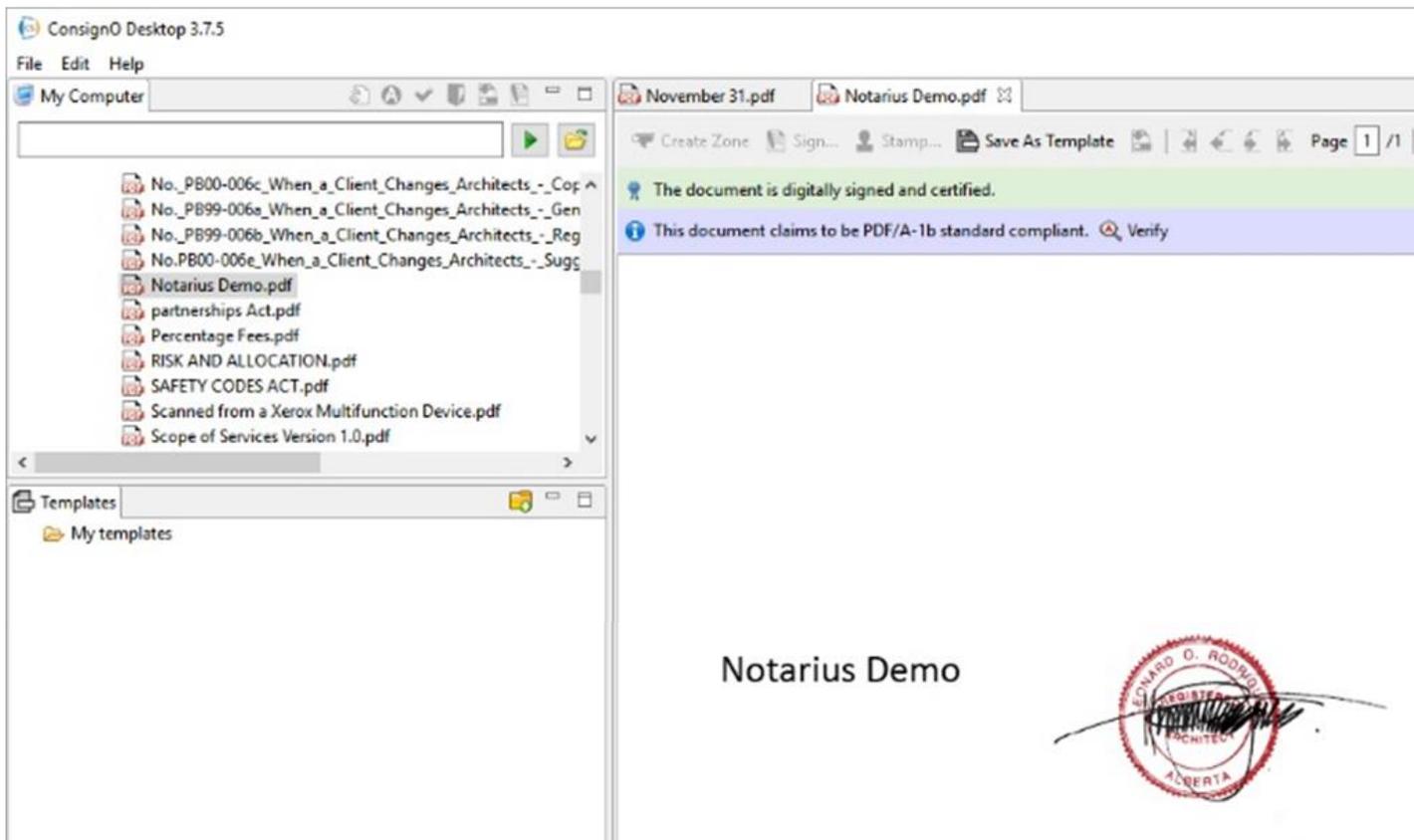
You will notice that there is a field at the upper right that is highlighted in light blue. This is the button to convert the file to a PDF/A compliant format. One you select and initiate the conversion, the bar across the top changes colour. The file is now a PDF/A document.



The next step is to tell the software where to sign. This is done by clicking a button called the “Create Zone” button and windowing an area on the document as follows:



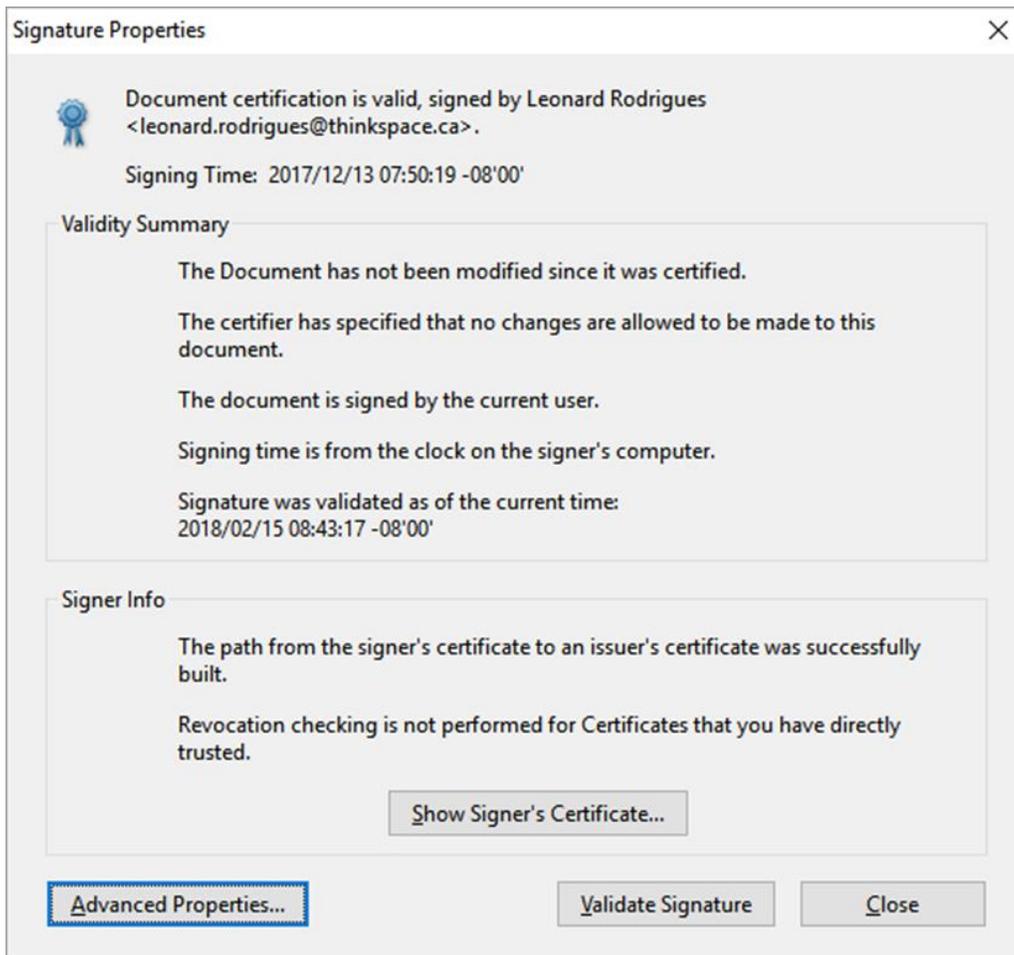
Once you have the signature or seal location where you want it, you then double click to sign. You will then be prompted to choose the seal or signature, indicate if the document cannot have any further changes made to it, and finally to enter your personal password. The result is:



You now have a signed and sealed document that is also dated (note the date below the seal and signature) cannot be changed, and has the encrypted certificate proving identity. It's that simple.

Certificate Encryption

Notarius embeds all the data on the authenticity of the document in the document itself. You can tell the difference in certificates and ordinary PDF documents by opening the navigation pane and clicking on signatures. There you will find the authentication information, who signed, the date it was signed, and the certificate issuing authority (in this case it is "CENTRE DE CERTIFICATION DU QUEBEC"). In addition, the encryption algorithm is extremely robust.



In general, the use of Notarius is secure and very easy. Just remember to not share your password with anyone. This is a personal seal and remains under your control as long as that is respected.

Note: This is a companion document to Practice Bulletin *PB-15 Documents Authentication*.