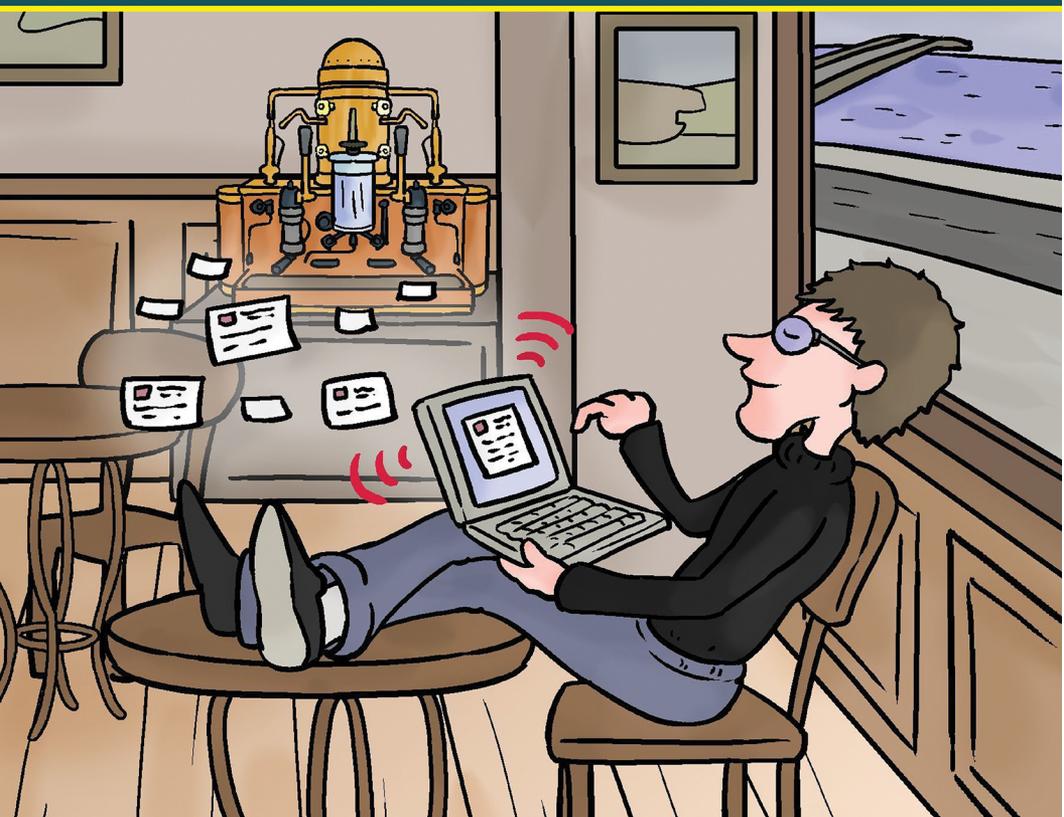


Conversational Google Workspace Email Signatures

By J. Peter Bruzzese (9-Time Microsoft MVP)



**In this
book, you
will learn:**

- The importance of uniform email signatures
- Email signature consistency challenges
- Exclaimer's solution for email signatures within Google Workspace

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 **Exclaimer**

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Exclaimer is the industry's leading provider of email signature solutions, empowering businesses to unlock the potential of email as a key digital advertising channel. With its award-winning tools, organizations can simplify the management of email signatures to deliver consistent branding, promote marketing campaigns and company news, gather real-time customer feedback, maintain legal compliance, and analyze results.

Over 60,000 organizations in 150+ countries rely on Exclaimer for their email signature solutions. Its diverse customer base includes Sony, Mattel, Bank of America, NBC, the Government of Canada, the BBC, and the Academy Awards.



Exclaimer

www.exclaimer.com

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Note from the Author

Greetings!

I remember the days when a signature was simply your name and title, perhaps some additional contact information. Using a web or email client to control your own signature was easy enough for most. Unfortunately, some took the creativity needle and pushed it off the charts with all sorts of weird fonts, graphics, quotes and such (without any concern for consistency).

At some point the email signature became a representation of the company itself. It therefore became necessary to regulate and make it uniform and consistent. In fact, email signatures are now considered part of the PR and marketing of a company, making the need for a consistent, professional signature a must-have.

In addition, regulation compliance has pushed the need to add disclaimers with the importance of having consistent signatures across devices (desktop vs. mobile). As a result, IT must look to provide uniformity over and above what users alone can do.

Although there are built-in tools for Google Workspace, there are times when a third-party solution may be needed to ensure your company is getting the full value from the signatures your employees send with each and every email correspondence.

J. Peter Bruzzese



The Hidden Value of Email Signatures



An email signature, when done right, is of tremendous benefit to organizations. So, it surprises me sometimes when I receive and read an email message wherein the content comes across as professional and then I glance at the signature which screams “amateurish”, “unprofessional” and/or “blah”.

At the same time, I also find that inconsistent email signatures jar my perception of the sender. One moment I get an email that has a signature and the next I get the “Sent from my iPhone” mobile flavor of the email.

I’m not judging folks for stepping out, and I certainly appreciate that they value me enough to email me on the go, but it’s a combination of the loss of professionalism the signature should provide combined with the TMI factor (i.e., I don’t want to know what device you’re using unless the real message is ‘please forgive all the typos and acronyms... I’m on my phone’).

I find I like it when I see a signature with the company logo. I find I dislike it when I see a signature that has a place for the logo, but the jpg didn’t come through. Ugh. I’m somewhat on the fence with signatures that contain the LinkedIn, Facebook, etc. logos, but I am definitely turned off when those graphics don’t render.

Key Uniform Email Signature Use Cases

There are four key goals a company should seek to achieve through a uniform email signature:

The Disclaimer: It’s common to see these at the bottom of emails with a mixture of language that hits confidentiality, privacy and/or legal concerns. The goal is to limit liability and there are different email disclaimer laws in different parts of the world.



You might think a disclaimer only has to go to external recipients, but this is not accurate. There have been a number of lawsuits that have occurred due to offensive emails that have been sent internally. So, it’s important to add an internal disclaimer, albeit one that differs from your external one.

The Professional Impression: Having each individual within an organization present their own “style” in an email signature may not give the image you want. Quotes, personal comments, graphics and so forth may be a display of an employee’s ‘personality’ but are not necessarily professional. Having a consistent email signature across the organization makes a better impression overall. It helps maintain the professionalism of your brand.

Sales/Marketing Efforts: Should the organization want to promote a current sales offer to prospects and current customers alike, it could utilize all outbound email communications to include details on what’s being promoted and next steps to take if interested. The manual approach to these types of efforts is to provide graphics to persons and ask that they add them to their signature (and hope they follow through).

The PR Value: An email signature can be used to convey the value of the brand, how to connect with the organization, promote an upcoming event, and more. Perhaps you want to include social media icons, award logos or other dynamic content. Often times when I have speaking engagements, I will put them in my signature to get the word out. Sometimes I’ll use a banner or graphic that links to the event itself. No doubt, your company may have similar events, news, product announcements and so forth that could be spread to a wider audience by simply using employees’ email signatures to do it.

But again, this cannot be left up to the whim and will of each end user. You have to ensure it’s done right, is centrally manageable, and is consistent from one device and email application to another.

Email is the most common form of communication in any business. It’s not only mission critical from the perspective of needing to be available: it’s essential that emails coming from

your company convey a uniform professionalism and maintain regulatory compliance standards.



Think about it... if your people use PCs, tablets, and mobile devices throughout their day but only the PC's email application has a signature, you are not providing a consistent, professional impression. And you're losing out on marketing/PR opportunities in the process. And... taking signatures to the next level... they can be useful in tracking click-through rates and more, based on the signature links.

I read a statistic that says the average employee sends 40 emails daily. So, in a 100-person company that's 4,000 emails every single day! A company can use that high-volume email load as a low-cost marketing tool, but only if they know how.

The hidden value in email signatures can only be unlocked if they aren't left to chance. Consistency (whether in the office or on the road), professional appearance, and uniformity throughout your organization... these are key aspects of email signatures that deliver value.

The Big Takeaways

Signatures are more than a personal sign-off or a place for self-expression. They're an opportunity for a company to provide information. They're a marketing space, a mini billboard sent to each recipient. They should look professional and maintain consistency regardless of the device sending the email. Do NOT leave your employees' signatures up to chance. Ensure a unified, consistent, compliant email is sent every time.

Challenges of Email Signature Consistency



Centrally managed email signatures are not as easy to establish as you might think. There is a technical side to it, as well as a design element that must be taken into consideration.

Methods for Controlling Email Signatures

I should start by saying that telling your end users to just create their own signatures in Gmail is not really an option; this is too important from a corporate perspective to leave it to chance and/or individual creativity. Having said that, Google Workspace, Google's cloud productivity suite, has very little functionality available to create and manage individual email signatures. Here are your basic options:

Using an Email Footer

Google Workspace does promote the presence of a universal "default signature" as a footer placed automatically at the end

of the emails of everyone within the organization. The result is a no frills, *text only* “signature” with the only real administrative granularity being whether it’s sent to internal as well as external recipients.

There are no options to pull in per-user details from Google Directory as parameters, so this option really is for a singular uniform signature to be used by all employees within the organization.

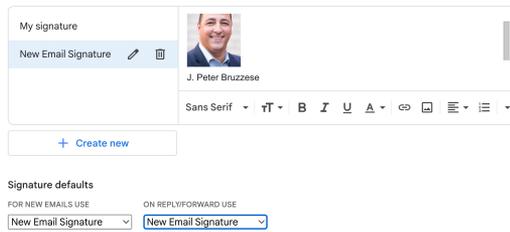


In actuality, given the fixed text-only capabilities, this “default signature” feature feels far more appropriate for a legal disclaimer than a signature.

Individual Gmail Signatures

Per-user email signatures (created by each individual user) are supported by Gmail – with support for images, links, and content up to 10,000 characters.

Signature:
(appended at the end of all outgoing messages)
[Learn more](#)



Creating a Gmail Signature

Images are linked to from an external web source, and Google keeps these signatures pretty simply-formatted so that they

appear consistently across with vast range of email clients available today.

Now, Gmail does support HTML signatures – so it *is* possible for IT to send out a standard email signature template here. But, even offering a signature template for users to copy and paste is going to have very mixed results – and there are two really big concerns I have here:

- 1) **Lack of compatibility** – there's no guarantee that HTML will render correctly on every email client. And that's a problem, given that one of the reasons for a standard email signature is consistent organizational branding.
- 2) **User error** – given individuals will need to use an HTML editor, will likely need to navigate multiple parts of the code to place their personal details, and then copy and paste the HTML into Gmail's settings, it feels like this is going to cause potentially more problems than it solves.

IT ideally needs to automate this process to address corporate/legal/consistency requirements, as well as ensure a way to easily update signatures without becoming a bottleneck for change requests from Legal, Marketing, HR, and Sales.

And that just doesn't exist natively.

Gmail APIs

Lastly, there does exist some developer tools that include code ([goto.cg/GmailSigCode](https://github.com/goto-cg/GmailSigCode)) where email signatures can be programmatically set.

Not A Lot of Great Options

It's evident that as an organization using Google Workspace, none of these options are ideal. With the goal being a unified, consistent email signature organization-wide, anything less than individual standardized signatures is a non-starter.

Note: There are a breadth of websites offering pre-made customizable email signature templates online (should this be the path you currently need to take).

Over in the world of Microsoft 365, there are *mail flow rules* (a.k.a. transport rules) within Exchange and/or Microsoft 365 Exchange Online to create HTML or plain text legal disclaimers. Unfortunately, Google Workspace has no such option.

Auto Signature Products

There are a variety of different ISVs that provide auto signature solutions to attach professionally formatted signatures to internal/outbound messages. These might be in the form of an add-on to your email client pointing to a Gmail account or through a cloud-based agent that attaches the signature after the message is sent.



For those who are used to physically seeing the attached signature (like it appears in a PC-based email client like Outlook) a cloud-based auto signature solution takes some getting used to because you don't see the signature when you hit send.

The Big Takeaways

Gmail within Google Workspace does have the ability to provide a minimal measure of email signature uniformity through the use of the Append Footer setting.

But, beyond the basic inclusion of text, you have to look at using HTML to fancify your signatures and/or look for email signature resources (i.e., pre-built HTML templates) you can use. And although template-based signatures can help an individual have an organization-sanctioned standardized email signature, it doesn't ensure professional formatting, consistent branding, required marketing elements, and more.

In other words, *It's not full email signature management.*

When compared to third-party email signature tools that provide a visual editor with no IT experience needed, a built-in set of templates and more, you may find you want and need to use an additional solution for your email signature when working with Google Workspace.

While Google doesn't really acknowledge the need to use a third-party platform to overcome the limitations of organization-wide signatures, they do list these types of vendors in the Google Workplace Marketplace.



Full disclosure: with all my IT experience, when it came time to ensuring my business put its best foot forward and used consistent, professional signatures across all devices for everyone in the company, I went to an auto-signature solution. I went to Exclaimer.

Sponsor Chapter: Exclaimer



It's safe to say, if you're an IT/Google Workspace admin, you would love to have a way to not only resolve the email signature uniformity conundrum, but either delegate it to someone else or provide automation of manual processes, which will, in both cases, give time back to the IT professional. Time that can be better used for strategic thinking.

Exclaimer does just that. Through a web-based user interface, you can create professional email signatures or delegate the process to someone with absolutely no IT expertise. From a single system, a non-IT user with no HTML skills can design and apply multiple signatures for all Google Workspace users.

The person designated to design the signatures will use the web-based UI where they can create email signatures using a

drag-and-drop editor or choose from a range of professional signatures in the template library. Contact details for the users will be pulled from Google Directory for fields like name, job title, phone number, etc. You'll also have the ability to use custom attributes in signatures, and any fields that aren't populated for a particular user in your directory will automatically be hidden without messing up the design.

The drag-and-drop signature editor allows you to easily add other elements such as logos, promotional banners, user photos, and social media icons. You can then implement marketing elements to turn email signatures into lead generation and personalization tools. For example, you can apply different banners that match the recipient's position in the buying cycle, ultimately creating an account-based marketing (ABM) channel.



The Signature Design UI



Once you have it set up, if you need to swap out the event banner or make a change you can make it for everyone at once through the signature editor. And don't even get me started on the value of the Signature Rules Tester! I can test users to see if they send internally/externally exactly what their signature will look like. What a huge time saver rather than saying "ok... let's test it... send an email to my Gmail account" for different users.

Once you've finished creating the signature, you can then apply it based on a number of different criteria:

- Group membership
- Whether the recipient is internal or external
- Whether the email is a reply or not
- Date/time range
- The sender/recipient domain
- Recipient email address
- Specific user attributes in Google Directory such as job title or country
- Presence of words in the subject line

Multiple users can be given access to your Exclaimer account, and you can assign them either admin or editor permissions. This ensures the correct person deals with the correct signatures, whether that be department or country-specific. This means that you don't have to rely on a single person to manage company-wide signatures.

How Exclaimer Works

Exclaimer is extremely flexible, providing multiple setup options depending on your particular needs.

1. Server-side configuration: Mail flow is configured to pass from Google to Exclaimer's regional Azure servers. The signature is added and then passed back to Google Workspace for sending.
2. Client-side only configuration: With this setup, mail flow does not pass through Exclaimer. Instead, signatures are sync'd to your users' Gmail client, where they can choose a specific email signature template created in Exclaimer.
3. Client and server-side (the best of both worlds): Email signatures are sync'd with Gmail, and emails are also passed through Exclaimer. This means your users still have the option to choose their signature, and they'll also get signatures stamped on emails sent from mobile devices and Macs.

There are a variety of new and interesting features that expand how Exclaimer works including:

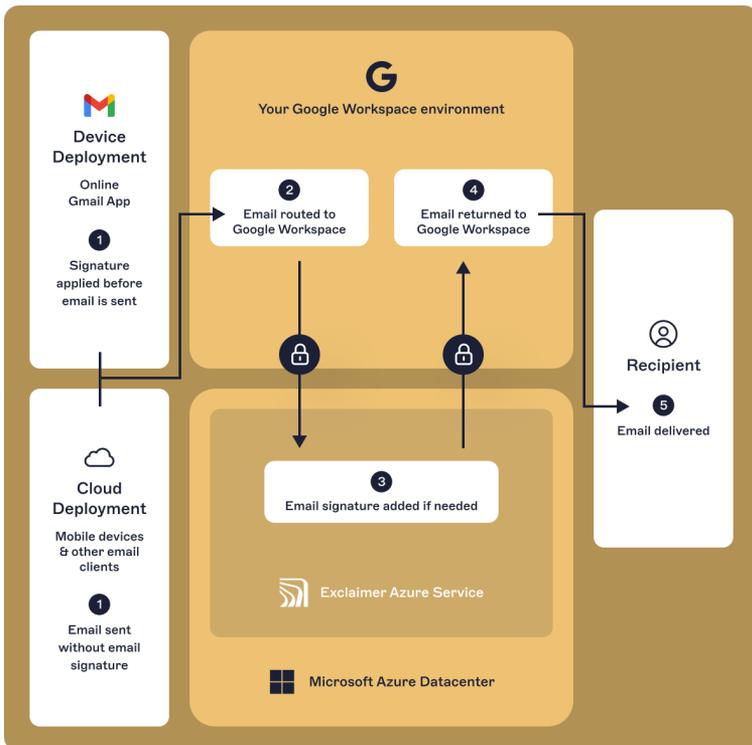
- Allowing client-side signatures to change automatically based on the email recipient
- Using email alias addresses and applying your signature to these emails
- Analytics dashboards to see how email signature templates are performing

The Azure Configuration Setup

Exclaimer is hosted within the Microsoft datacenter world (the Azure side).

This is not just comforting from a security perspective and a desire to avoid email tampering; from a latency perspective, having the solutions “near” each other physically and in similar datacenter/network spheres can help reduce excessive latency concerns.

On the Azure side, setup is done so you have a high-availability, load-balanced configuration. A mail route setup in Google Workspace passes the email to a regional Exclaimer Azure server. After the signature is applied, it passes the email back before it gets sent out.



As for 'how' the signature is applied, when the email reaches the Azure server, Exclaimer examines the message 'envelope', which includes the sender's details and intended recipients, determining which signature to apply to the email.

The sender's attributes are pulled from the cached Google Directory data, which is used to populate the selected signature, e.g., name, job title, phone number, etc. Exclaimer then ascertains where the signature is to be inserted. It decodes the MIME (Multipurpose Internet Mail Extensions)/TNEF (Transport Neutral Encapsulation Format) carrier to do this.

The signature is then inserted in the appropriate location and this new email is sent back to Google Workspace. The email is then forwarded onto its original recipient/s.

Exclaimer does not save any email content to an external location. This is due to the SMTP mode of integration with Google Workspace not requiring emails to be stored prior to being forwarded back to Google Workspace.

All it does is look for a reply separator in order to apply the signature correctly. It also scans the message body for any unique strings to determine if a signature is already present, i.e. during email conversations.



On a personal level, one of the things I love about Exclaimer is the ability I have to use an internal and external signature. But that's not the best part. When I send an email to persons inside and outside the company, Exclaimer appends the internal signature to my internal people, and external signature to external people. Off the same email I send!

Key Features

The most obvious features revolve around the marketing elements. Consistent, professional-looking signatures that you build and test easily. Banners and clickable elements to take recipients to your social media pages (Facebook, LinkedIn, X and so forth). But, beyond the obvious options, there are a bevy of marketing features available within Exclaimer. These include:

- **Social Feeds**, which allow you to display the three latest Facebook or LinkedIn posts within the signature. This will strengthen connections and communities with those who already know you. Plus, there are analytics to help you see which posts resonate more with your audiences.
- **Integrating with Salesforce**, which allows you to pull recipient lists directly from Salesforce into the management platform to ensure audiences receive tailored signature content based on where they are in the buying journey.
- **Campaigns** that let you schedule banner campaigns to deliver highly personalized messages to your audiences at optimal times.
- **The Branding Center**, which enables you to set branding attributes in advance to ensure automatic unification or alignment of signatures toward your brand.

Headline Content

We often think of an email signature as something that solely goes at the bottom of an email. But through Exclaimer, you can also add content at the *top*, above the body section, to drive greater engagement from your business emails.

From an internal email perspective, you can use this feature to promote key company mindsets, or alert all to an upcoming event like a product kick-off.

From an external email perspective, this is valuable for brand awareness content. Or for promoting an event, perhaps an upcoming conference or webinar. Or for encouraging customer feedback through a survey.

Feedback

In addition, Exclaimer offers the ability to add in a 1-click survey to an email signature template, providing an easy way to gain stakeholder feedback in real-time. This is a million miles from those long-winded customer surveys that hardly anyone responds to.

By using universal images like emoticons or stars and embedding them directly into a signature template, customers can quickly provide feedback on their level of satisfaction (i.e. outstanding, good, neutral, and bad). This feedback can then be used to inform all manner of business improvements, including on the customer experience itself.

Appointments

We've talked about the value of a consistent email signature from a company awareness and marketing perspective. And we've also seen how the extension of a customer feedback solution can take your email to the next level. Exclaimer also has appointment booking capability through integrations with Calendly and Microsoft Bookings.

It connects with Outlook or Google calendars and shows real-time availability that can be configured by the users to ensure the days/time offered are what they prefer.

New appointments are added automatically, and reminders are sent to both the user and the requester through email and SMS. It can integrate with both Teams and Zoom for video conference calls.

The booking link can also be shared outside your signature so you can copy and paste it to send to folks, going beyond the signature link option.

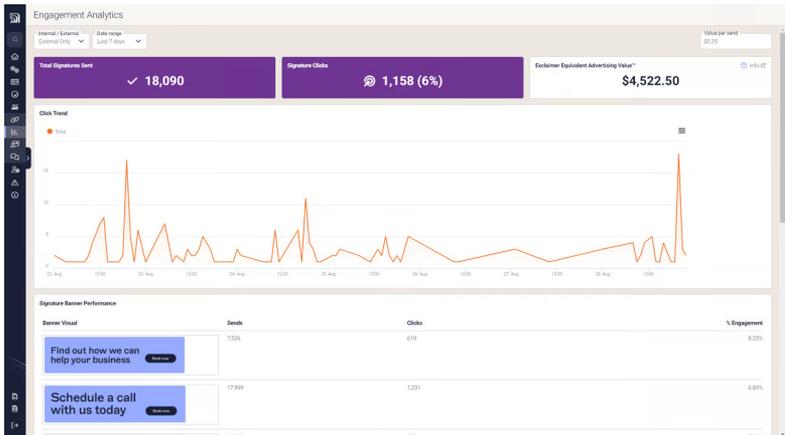
Personally, I love it when I see an option to choose an appointment time with a person I'm looking to talk with. I hate playing phone tag or back and forth "here's my schedule, what's YOUR schedule" games with folks. As a user it's easier for me to choose a day/time. So, from a different angle, that of a marketing professional perhaps, or a salesperson, to offer a fast, effortless way for folks to book time with you... that's gold.

Analytics

If your signatures are an organized marketing initiative, as they should be, you want to be able to see clear outcomes.

Exclaimer already allowed you to view click-through rates on signatures, but now offers the ability to drill into an individual signature to see which elements are performing the best.

Domain attribution on those clicks lets you see which recipients are clicking on your signatures to ensure the actions you're trying to direct are working.



Along with analytics, a signature score has been added so you can gauge which signatures perform best. The score is based off of extensive anonymized global research. This allows you to optimize your signatures based on objectives. All of the data and analytics feed into another feature, signature recommendations, which will guide you on how best to design the right signature for your goals.



Pondering all of these features and options, think back to the previous chapter that explains the extent to which you can construct and deploy signatures using built-in Google Workspace tools. It's no wonder Google encourages you to seek out a third-party solution if you need more robust signature development and utilization.

Strict Security Maintained

Exclaimer ensures the security of your email and its contents on a number of levels. It starts with support for Google single sign-on to ensure those users managing signatures are who they say they are.

Second, signatures can be grouped together and secured from unauthorized access, making certain they are not tampered with prior to being appended to emails. Lastly, the connectors we spoke of earlier will protect the integrity of the mail flow. SSL certificates and TLS encryption are used to provide a secure connection between Google Workspace and Exclaimer.

Data is encrypted using a combination of RSA-2048-bit asymmetric encryption and a one-time use Rijndael symmetric session key. Rijndael is an algorithm selected by the U.S. National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) as the Advanced Encryption Standard (AES). Keys issued are managed through certificates, with several of these being used for encipherment (converting a message into a cipher for encryption and decryption) purposes.

When Exclaimer processes an email, it examines the message to decipher the sender's details so it can apply the relevant signature as configured within the UI. It also scans the mail for common strings that represent a reply separator, so the signature can be inserted in the correct location.

Exclaimer does not actually 'read' the message in the traditional sense, and the email content is not saved (persisted to disk) or available to Exclaimer personnel.

Overall, because the email stays in the Microsoft Cloud loop – and because proper connector protocols are used to ensure security – email is not compromised at rest, nor is it able to be compromised in transit through the signature "stamping" process.

Worldwide Availability

Exclaimer for Google Workspace is hosted in 4 regional Microsoft Azure locations globally. Each region has a primary and secondary datacenter, ensuring your mail flow is constant,

even in the rare event of an issue occurring in the primary datacenter.

Trusted by Millions of Users

Exclaimer adheres to many internationally recognized cloud security standards. It's both ISO/IEC 27001 and ISO/IEC 27018 certified by the British Standards Institution (BSI), ensuring its information security management system (ISMS) complies with rigorous security standards.



Additionally, Exclaimer has achieved the SOC 2 Type II attestation, which confirms that its global systems and operations meet the Trust Services Principles for Security, Availability, and Confidentiality.

Exclaimer's Trust Portal, powered by Conveyor, offers an efficient and transparent way to access essential information about the company's approach to cloud security and reliability.



To

Subject

Regards,

 **Robin Morris**
Head of Product

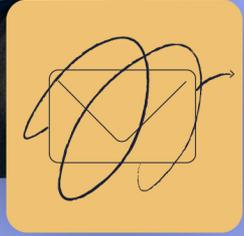
T: +123 456 7890
E: robin@syncanddeliver.com
W: syncanddeliver.com





Rated excellent
by our customers

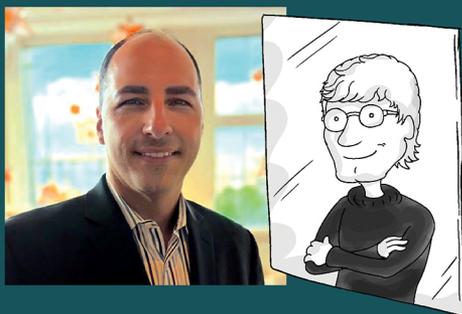


Turbo-boost your email signatures

Get the power to create, control, and deploy company email signatures and fire-up a new marketing channel with world-leading email signature management.

Quickly become conversational about Google Workspace email signatures.

If you're moving to, or are already on Google Workspace, it's essential to understand the value of email signature consistency and the possible ways of achieving such uniformity, as there are built-in methods that provide less-than-stellar results. In this book, we cover the why and how to achieve consistent email signatures within Google Workspace.



About J. Peter Bruzzese

J. Peter, an 9-time Microsoft MVP awardee (Exchange/Office365), is an internationally recognized journalist, published author, and speaker. He is co-founder of both Conversational Geek and ClipTraining. Follow him on Twitter @JPBruzzese.



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