Electronic Filing of B1 Forms With Electronic Filing Agents

INTRODUCTION

In version 4.1 of Relate Company Secretary, electronic filing of B1 forms using the new Electronic Filing Agents is enabled. Filing these forms electronically has the following advantages:

- The filing fee for a paper B1 forms is €40, whereas the filing fee for an electronic B1 form is €20.
- Regardless of filing method, the B1 form is required to be filed within 28 days of the company's ARD. However, where the B1 has been filed electronically, there is a further 28 days allowed after the B1 submission before the accounts / annexed documents are required to be submitted. This is the same as the existing situation for electronically filed returns.
- Filing using the Electronic Filing Agent method removes the requirement to get IDs and PINs from the Companys' officers.

We refer you to the CRO's information leaflet No. 15 for details of the Statutory Electronic Filing Agent process. This is available for download at:

http://www.cro.ie/GetAttachment.aspx?id=a499b05e-021c-47a1-b7b1-d0537592e3dd

Please make sure you follow all the steps detailed below in order to take advantage of the Electronic Filing Agent process.

Verification Signatories

In order to become a statutory Electronic Filing Agent, you will need to first decide who in your office you want to have digital signatures for use on B1 forms, and who in your office should have access to these signatures.

By default, all users of the system will have access to all signatures. If you wish to restrict access to these signatures, see the section below on Security.

The individuals that you wish to have digital signatures now need to be set up in the Individuals database. Name, Address, Date of Birth, Nationality, PPS Number and Directorships need to be filled in for each individual, and Verification Signatory (on the E-Filing tab) needs to be ticked.

When this is complete, print a J2 form for the individual. You can print this from the Individuals browse screen, by clicking the down-arrow beside 'Print', and selecting J2 Form.

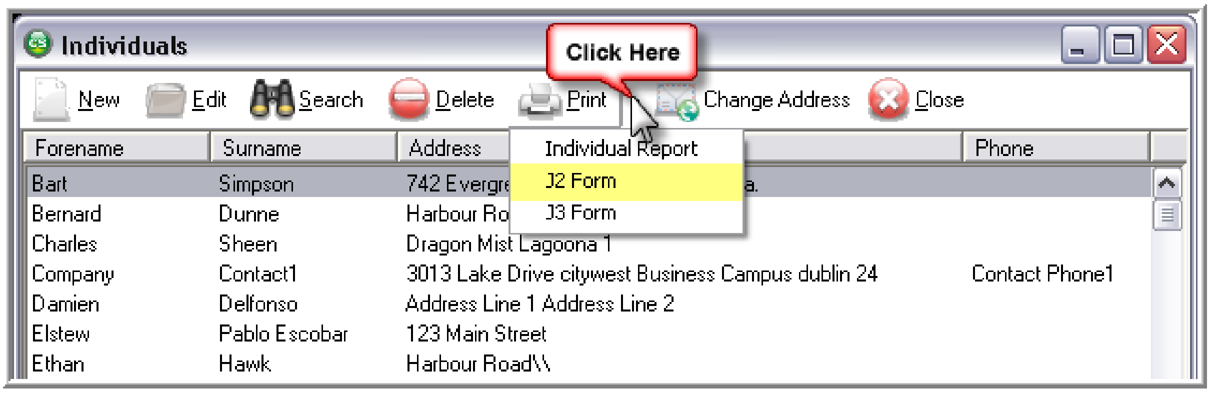

Figure 1

When the J2 form has been processed by the CRO, the individual will receive an ID and PIN by post. These should be entered on the E-Filing tab under their Individual record.

Application for CRO account and application to act as an Electronic Filing Agent

Go to Tools / Options, and go to the E-Filing tab.

If you do not have an on-line account with the CRO, you will need to get one using the A/C1 form. Fill in whatever information is relevant in the fields Company Number, PPS Number, Business Name Number and CRO Registered Client number. CRO ID should be either your Company Number or Business Name Number. Select your Presenter name, ensure that Test E-Filing is not ticked, and E-Mail E-Filing Results is ticked.

As your CRO account must be in credit at all times, you will need to send a cheque with the A/C1 form to cover a typical month's usage.

With this information entered, print the A/C1 Form and the new J1a Form. The J1a form will list the individuals that you previously selected as being Verification Signatories.

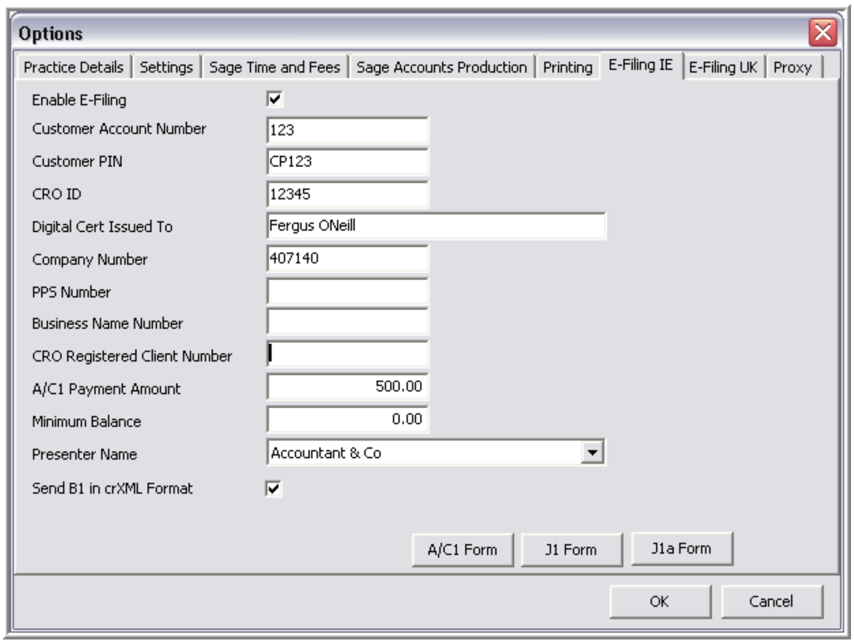

Figure 2

You should now submit all J2 forms, A/C1 form (if you do not already have a CRO account) and J1a form to the CRO. When they have processed this, they will send you some digital certificates (and an account number and PIN if you do not already have a CRO account)

Installing the CRO Digital Certificates

If you do not already have Digital Certificates from the CRO, you will need to install them before electronically filing. You will receive two digital certificates from the CRO by email. Save the two attachments to disk (any location will do)

Load Internet Explorer, and click Tools/Internet options from the text menu. Select the Tab called "Content" as shown below and click on the "Certificates" button.

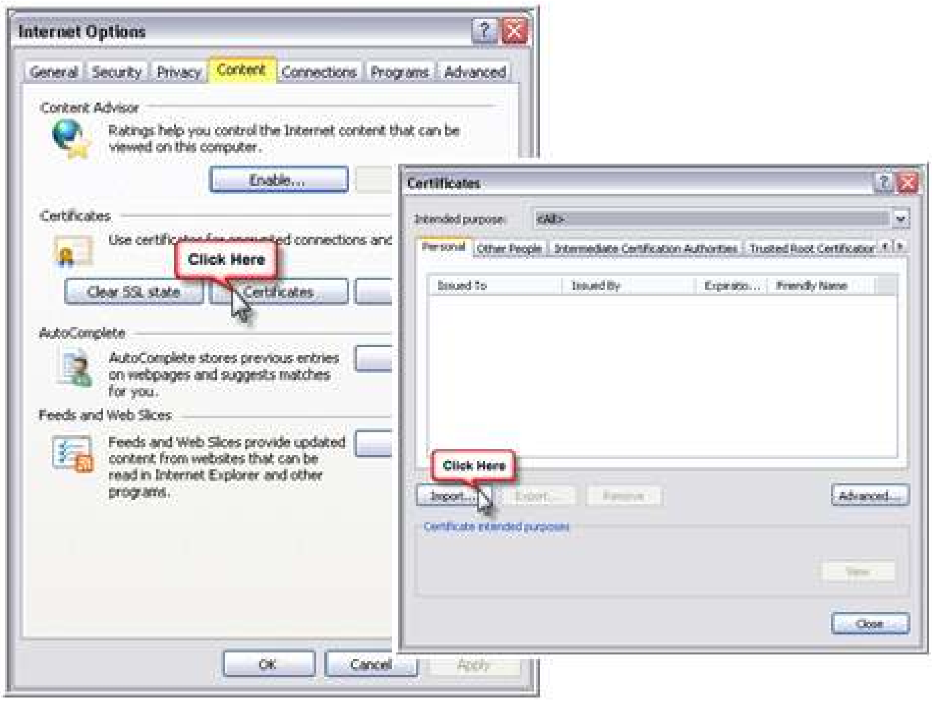

Figure 3

You need to load two certificates in this section. Click the Import button and a wizard screen will appear.

Figure 4

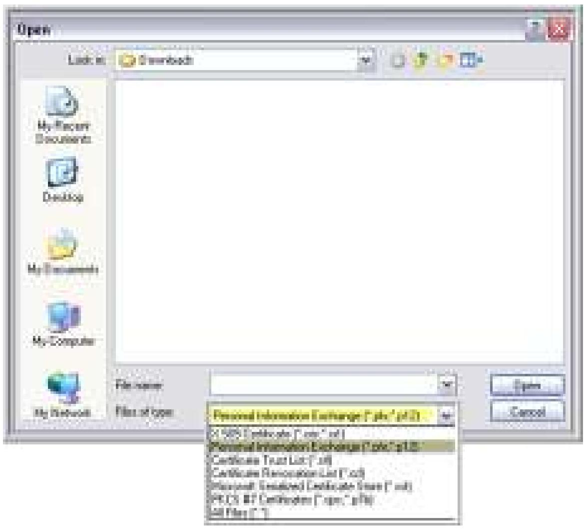

Figure 5

Change the “Files of Type” to “Personal Information Exchange” and browse to the location where you saved the certificates. Select the Certificate that appears and select the Open button. The Certificate will now appear in the wizard as selected. Select the Next button to continue.

Enter your Password (This is your CRO Account Number). Select the Next button to continue. Choose the option “Automatically select the certificates store based on the type of Certificate” and select the Next button to proceed.

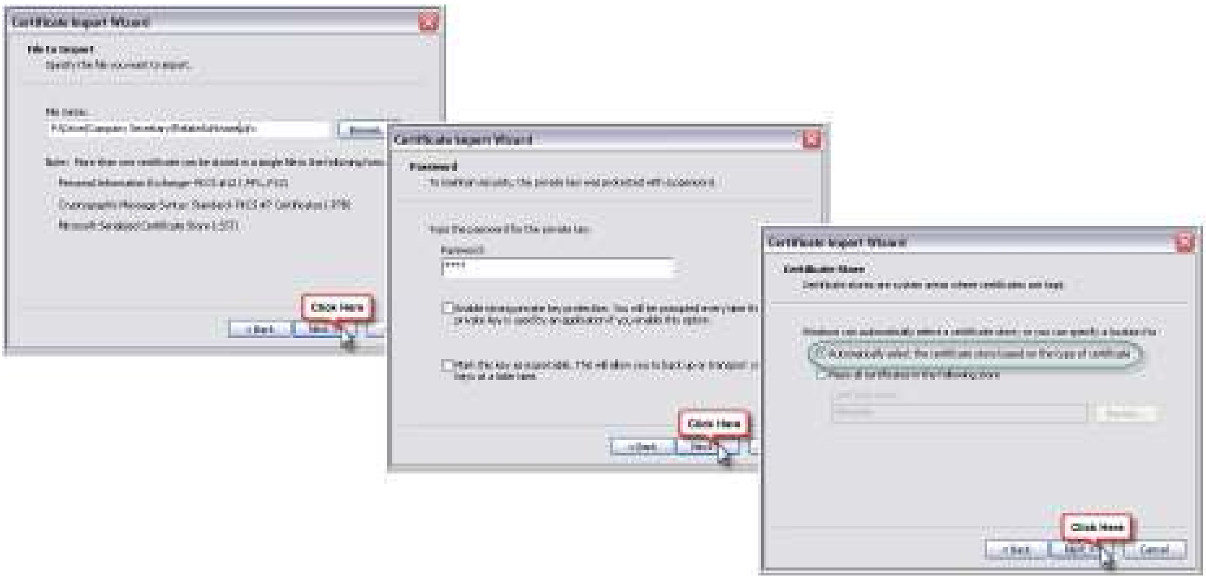

Figure 6

Complete the Certificate Import by selecting the Finish button in the final screen. You will be alerted to say the “Import has been Successful”.

You will now need to repeat the above import process for the other digital certificate. When browsing for this certificate, ensure that File Type is X.509 Certificate is selected (there is no password on this Certificate).

Authorisation by companies of Electronic Filing Agents

When you have completed all of the above, your practice is now set up to act as an Electronic Filing Agent on behalf of clients. You now need to get authorisation from the companies to act on their behalf. This is achieved using a B77 form.

In your company browse, highlight the company you wish to act as Electronic Filing Agent for, click the down-arrow beside 'Print', and select B77.

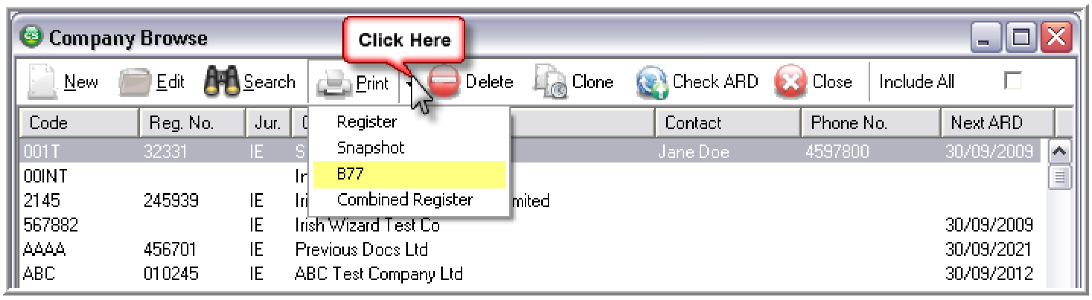

Figure 7

The B77 needs to be certified by an officer of the company, so if you know who is going to sign it you can select their name from the following screen. Clicking Print will give you the completed B77 form.

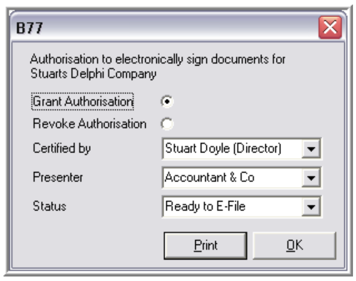

Figure 8

When this form has been submitted and processed by the CRO, you will receive notification of authorisation from them. When this is received, change E-Filing Authorisation to Authorised on the Company's Misc. tab.

Figure 9

E-Filing a B77

Currently, there is a €15 filing fee for a paper B77 form. However, you may alternatively E-File the B77 form, and this is free of charge.

1. On the Companies Browse screen, highlight the company you wish to act as Electronic Filing Agent for, click the down-arrow beside 'Print', and select B77.

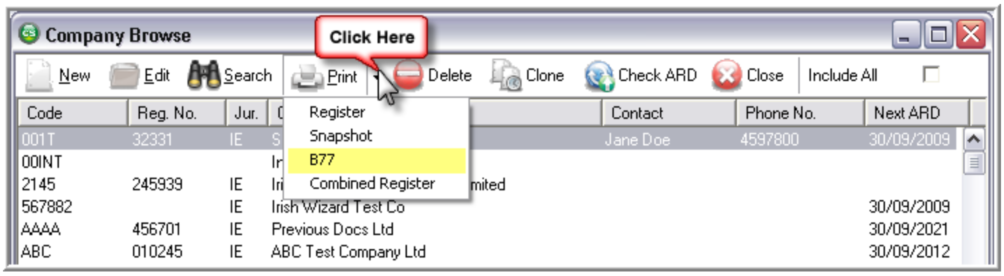

Figure 10

2. Select the officer who is certifying the B77 form, select the presenter, and set Status to 'Ready to E-File'. Then click Close.

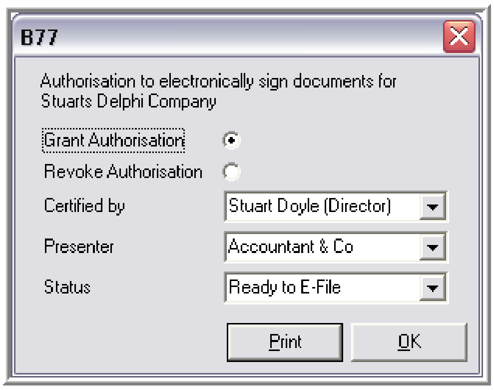

Figure 11

3. Now go to E-Filing, and select B77; all outstanding B77s will be listed. Click the Send 

button. This will send all B77 forms that have the status 'Ready to E-File'

Figure 12

4. You will receive an email from the CRO that shows the detail of the B77, along with a Signatory sheet. The signatory sheet will show you which officers are required for signing.
5. When the signatory sheet has been signed, send it to the CRO.
6. At any stage after the initial electronic submission, you may check the status of the submission by clicking Status in the E-Filing section of the package. The Status may be:
    - **Sent to CRO**. This means that the submission has been sent.
    - **Received by CRO**. This means that the return has passed validation checks on the CRO server.
    - **Lodged with CRO**. This means that the submission has been successfully filed and closed by the CRO.
    - **Error with submission**. This means that there was a problem with the submission. You should receive more details on the nature of the error when you check the status.
7. When the status goes to 'Lodged with CRO', you may act as an Electronic Filing Agent for the company. Until this status is reached, you do not yet have authorisation.

Security

As the ID and PIN are considered equivalent to personal signatures, you may wish to restrict the access of particular users to these signatures.

If you do not already have any Users set up on your system, you first need to ensure that you have at least one access group set up. Go to Tools / Access Groups and ensure that there is at least one entry there with all boxes ticked. If you wish, other groups may be set up with access to various parts of the system restricted.

Figure 13

Now go to Tools / Users, and either create new users or edit existing ones. You can select one of the access groups (as set up above), a password (if required) and which signature the user will have access to. Access can be given to all signatures, no signatures or one particular signature.

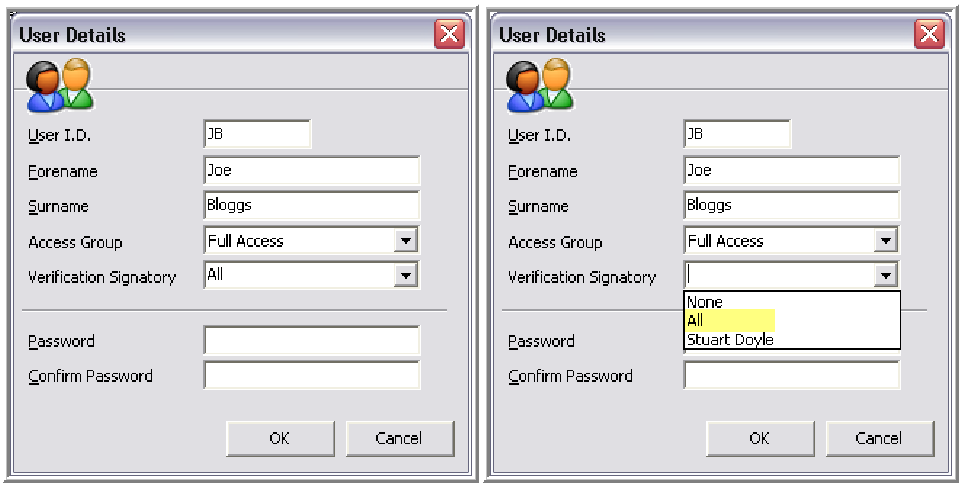

Figure 14

If no users are set up, anybody using the system will have access to all signatures that have been set up.

Creating and electronically filing a B1.

Once all the previous steps have been completed, you are in a position to electronically file a B1 form for a company.

1. First, create the Annual Return event in the normal way. If the company has B77 authorisation, you will be able to select the signatory on the last screen of the event wizard.

   The signatories available will depend on your security settings. If no users have been set up, you will be able to select any of the available signatories; if you are logged in as a user, you will be able to select signatures based on your user settings.

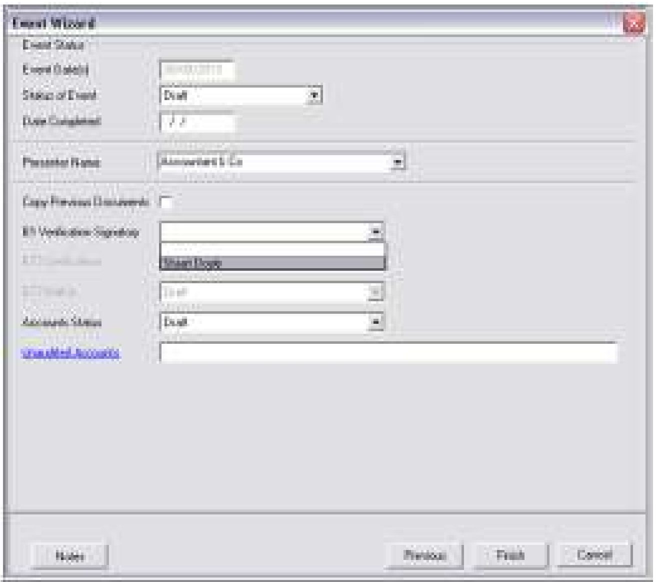

Figure 15

2. Once you have the B1 created, check it as you normally would. When you are happy with it, set the Status to “Ready to E-File”.

Figure 16

3. In Relate Company Secretary, go into E-Filing and select the relevant form type (i.e. B1 Events).

4. You will see on the E-Filing screen that the signing type is Agent.

5. Click Send. This will send all forms (of the relevant form type) that have the status ‘Ready to E-File’ and have a date that is on or before today’s date.

6. You will receive an email from the CRO that shows the detail of the B1.

7. In E-Filing, highlight the return and click Print. This prints the Patch page that you need to send to the CRO along with any required annexed documents.

8. At any stage after the initial electronic submission, you may check the status of the submission by clicking Status in the E-Filing section of the package. The Status may be:

   · Sent to CRO. This means that the submission has been sent.

   · Received by CRO. This means that the return has passed validation checks on the CRO server.

   · Lodged with CRO. This means that the submission has been successfully filed and closed by the CRO.

   · Error with submission. This means that there was a problem with the submission. You should receive more details on the nature of the error when you check the status.