

Are the CATAS digital test reports legally valid? And how is it possible to understand if they have been counterfeited?

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Frequently we are asked to verify the authenticity of our digital test reports, and several times we found documents counterfeited both in good and in bad faith.

CATAS protects itself and the test report users by placing on its documents the digital signature, which guarantees:

- authenticity;
- paternity, the identity of the signer;
- integrity, which means that the document has not been modified after being digitally signed.

A digitally signed document is legally comparable to a hard copy and moreover its handling is easier and faster.

CATAS has been a forerunner in this field by proposing the electronic management of test reports with digital signature since 2006. Today almost all documents are managed in this way.

HOW TO CHECK THE VALIDITY OF A CATAS TEST REPORT?

To check the validity of a CATAS test report, you have to open the file with a PDF Reader like [Adobe Acrobat Reader DC](#). All the information regarding the signature is displayed on the “[Signature Panel](#)” (choose View > Show/Hide > Navigation Panels > Signatures, or click the Signature Panel button in the document message bar).

The document could be:

- “*Signed, all signatures are valid*” (figure 1). In this case **the document is regular**.
- “*The validity of the document certification is UNKNOWN. The author could not be verified*” and “*The signature is valid, but revocation of the signer’s identity could not be checked*” (figure 2). It means that the signature is valid, the document has not been modified after the signature but probably the certificate used to sign the document has expired. The test report is **most likely valid** but to be absolutely sure it is necessary to [contact us](#).
- If no digital signature is detected (signature panel not present) or the signature panel reports other errors, the document is **potentially counterfeit**. Authenticity, paternity and integrity are not guaranteed. To check its validity, it is necessary to [contact us](#) and request a digital copy of the test report.

In the future CATAS will adopt the LTV (Long Term Validation) digital signature: the document obtained in this way will be valid beyond the expiration of the certificate and of the time stamp.

Furthermore, in order to prevent the falsification of the documents and to better protect the interests of the public faith as well as the commercial relations with its customers, with their collaboration, CATAS wants to include in its website a section with the ID of the altered test reports.

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Examples of information that can be viewed on the “signature panel” of Acrobat Reader. In the first case the test report is regular (all the signatures are valid). In the second case, it is possible that the signature is regular but that the certificate of signature has expired (it is advisable to request confirmation from Catas).

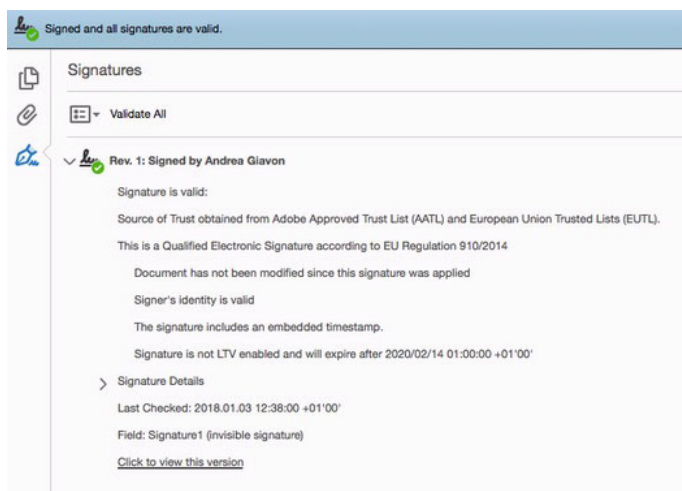


Figure 1

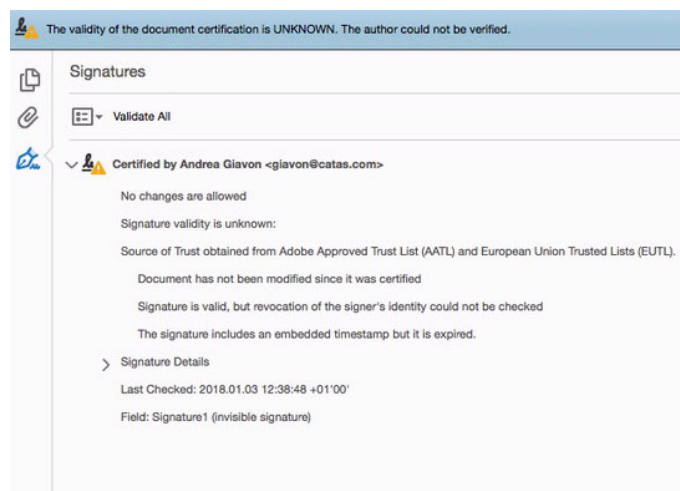


Figure 2



LEGAL ASPECTS/INFORMATION

According to the Italian Digital Administration Code, the computerized document signed with a digital signature (in our case, certified) has the effectiveness of private writing pursuant to art. 2701 cc. and does not allow the disclaimer of the signed document. More simply, the certified digital signature guarantees (or should) from so-called false materials, because the technology of encrypted keys prevents alterations or signatures from unauthorized subjects.

As the function of the certified signature is therefore to guarantee a substantial and formal “truth” of the signed informatic document, it is clear that the alteration or counterfeiting of a digitally signed informatic document constitutes a violation, which our legal system punishes with the of a pecuniary sanction.

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