

The 5 Best Apps For Freelance Designers

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Manage your email, time, money, daily tasks, and legal documents better with these (nicely designed) digital tools.

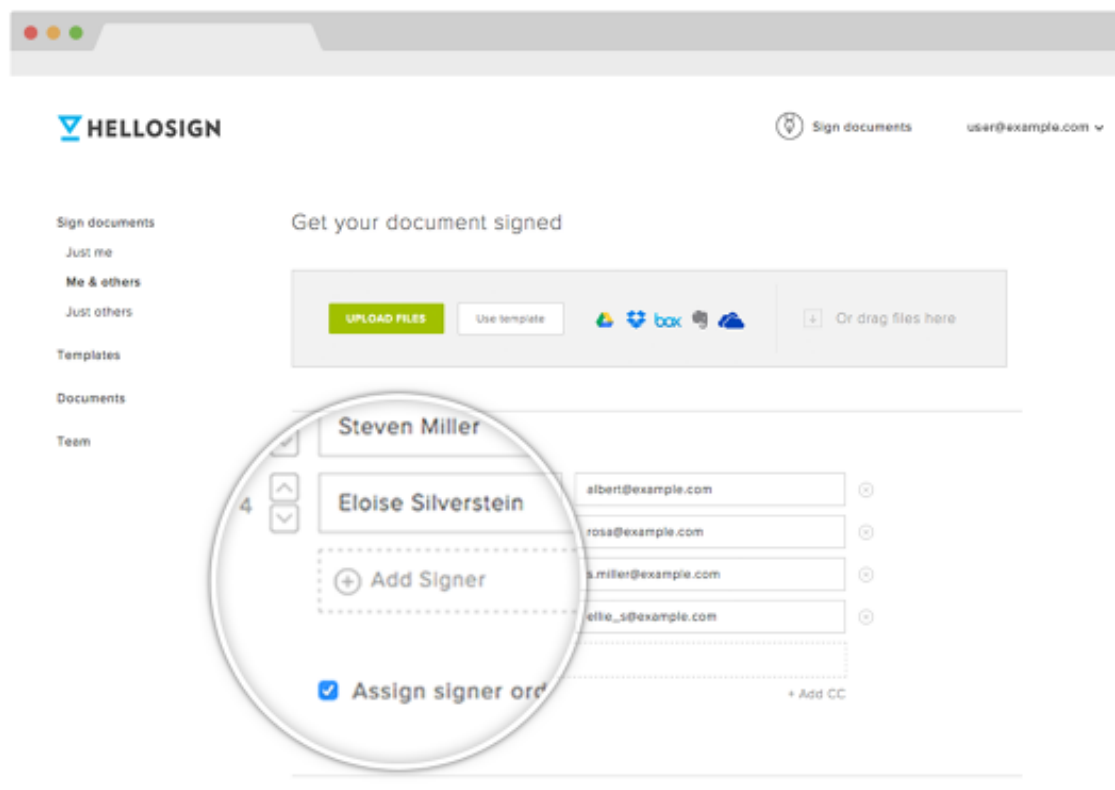
Managing your time and money is tough with any job, but going freelance will inevitably increase the frustration—and the necessity—tenfold. The organizational infrastructure that often goes unnoticed and underappreciated at a full-time job is suddenly obvious once it's missing. Processing business expenses, delineating work hours, saving for income taxes—it's all on you.

But this is 2016, so it goes without saying that there are about a million apps for each hurdle you might encounter. We narrowed it down to our favorite five. We didn't include tools for the actual designing—for that you should head over to Khoi Vinh's [Subtraction blog](#)—just apps that help manage the business side of things. But yes, we did factor in clean and clever interface design.

FOR MANAGING EMAIL

[Boomerang](#) has been around since 2011, but it's such a simple, useful plug-in that it hasn't gone out of style. For freelancers working weird hours, it's especially handy: The Gmail plug-in let's you schedule your emails to be delivered during regular work hours, so you don't pester people at 11 p.m. You can schedule your own messages to repost at the top of your inbox, unread, to serve as a reminder to follow up. A new feature will rate your email's strength based on things like subject length, word count, and politeness, though that seems like overkill.

FOR SIGNING CONTRACTS



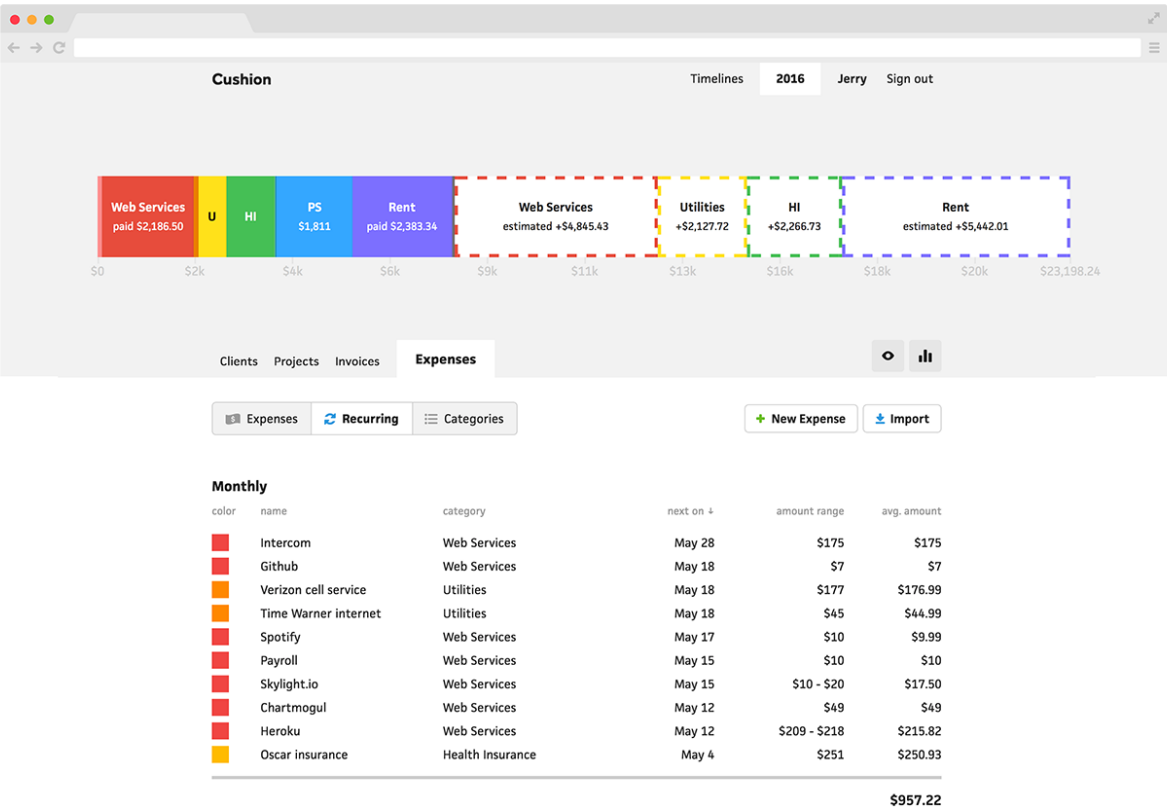
You never think you'll miss your office's clunky Xeroxes until you're without them, and you need to print, sign, and scan a contract with a new client. Going to FedEx is always a terrible experience, and the expense adds up. [HelloSign](#) is another Gmail plug-in that lets you fill out and sign forms and contracts from your computer, then send them back, all without leaving your Gmail browser. (Or your house.)

TO KEEP UP WITH YOUR TASKS



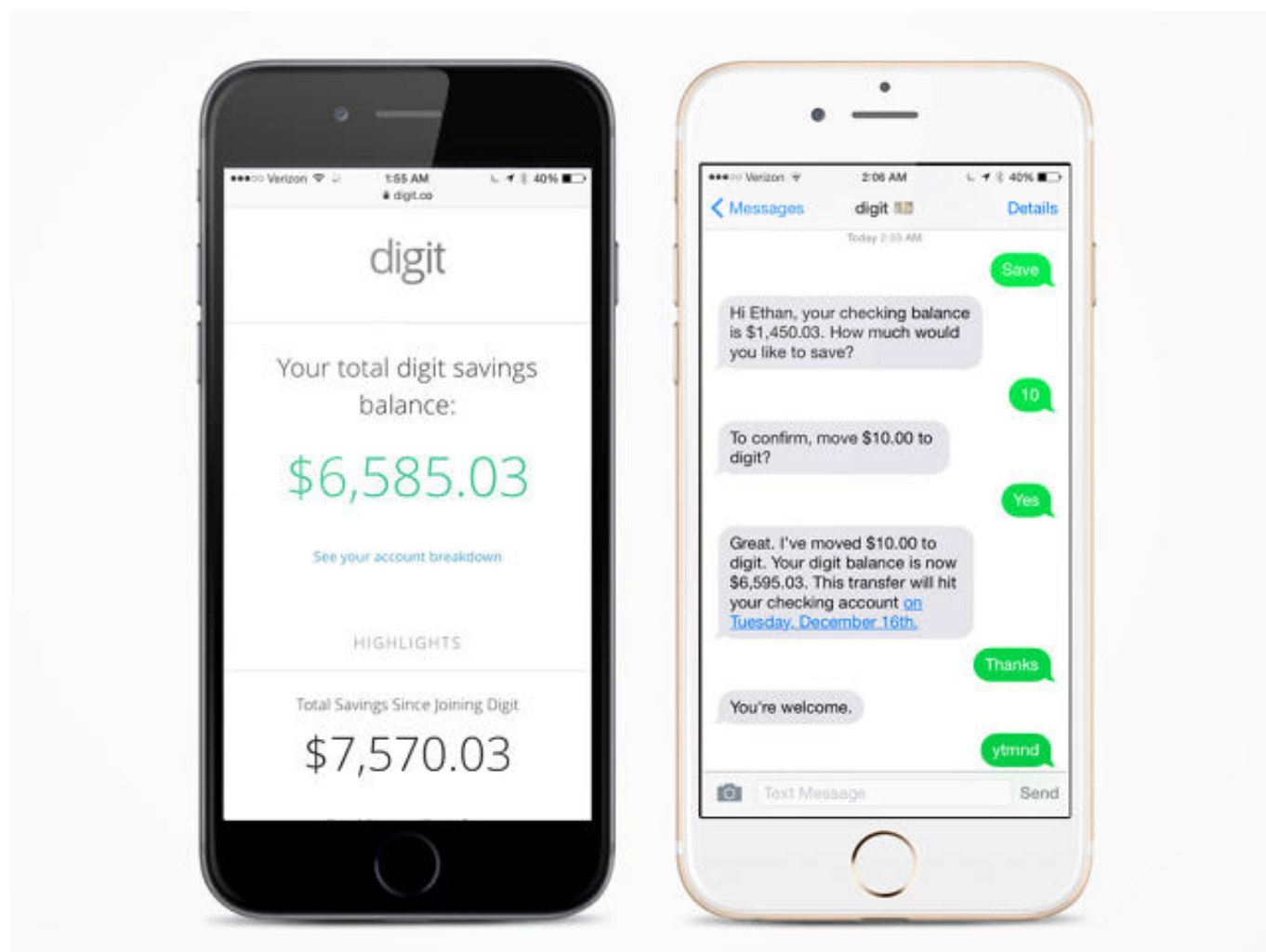
There are plenty of to-do list apps out there, but [TeuxDeux](#) is [beautifully designed](#) and exceedingly simple. Add your daily tasks in a list under the date, click to erase them when you're done, and add more long-term tasks in a list at the bottom. It's essentially a digital version of a pen and paper to-do list, which is all you really need, except that it's always with you. TeuxDeux is the brain child of design blogger [Swiss Miss](#), and will cost you a subscription fee of \$3 a month.

FOR MANAGING TIME AND MONEY



Poor time and money management can be the downfall of any freelance designer, and [Cushion](#) can help with both. The app manages projects by visualizing your upcoming schedule from a bird's-eye view then allowing you to zoom in on a specific task or day. It will alert you when you're overbooked. And a new invoicing feature, now in beta, will offer a sharp-looking template, allowing you to enter your rates and expenses, calculate the tax, then save it into a PDF ready to send out to clients.

TO KEEP UP WITH EXPENDITURES



Budgeting personal finances is crucial for a freelancer: If you have a slow month or your clients don't pay you on time, you want something to fall back on. Plus, taxes sneak up on you when they aren't getting taken out of your pay check incrementally. Setting aside money for taxes and accruing a savings is as easy as setting up an automatic transfer through online banking, but **Digit** will help keep you accountable for saving a little more when you can afford it. Using an algorithm generated through your personal settings, the app takes money out of your spending account and puts it in your savings—but the amount it transfers depends on the state of your finances. If you've been spending a lot, it will take out less, but if you've just had a good project load it will put more aside for a rainy day. Sometimes, the apps know best.

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