DON'T SCAN IT YOURSELF — HERE'S WHY

The problems and inaccuracies associated with scanning it yourself

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LEARN ABOUT:

- Top 10 mistakes with "do it yourself' scanning
- Why you should outsource your scanning projects
- What's possible with the proper scanning equipment
- The benefits of proper indexing
- The benefits of proper publishing

OVERVIEW

Most organizations have back logs of paper documents that take up too much space and the information contained in the paper is hard to find. The solution to this problem is to scan the documents and store the images electronically. Unfortunately, most people assigned this task in your typical law office, accounting firm, financial organization, doctor's office etc… have had no formal training in scanning or electronic records management. Because they are amateurs they make mistakes (hey, that's what amateurs do). The purpose of this article is to help organizations avoid these scanning pitfalls.

THE RISK

If it is not important then why are you scanning it? So if the documents are important then what are the risks of poor scanning and indexing practices? If the information is not readable or if the document is improperly indexed so that it is "lost in the data" then there may be the following repercussions:

♦ Loss of revenue because not able to confirm information
♦ Law suits because of inability to provide evidence
♦ Appearance of unprofessionalism
♦ Tax penalties

TOP 10 MISTAKES

The top 10 mistakes amateur scanning and indexing operators make are:

♦ Poor or unreadable image quality
♦ Image resolution too low (poor image quality and pixilation)
♦ Image resolution too high (too much storage space and too long to download)
♦ Scanning black and white as greyscale or colour
♦ Scanning greyscale as black and white
♦ Skewing (images crooked)
♦ Not scanning backs of pages
♦ Image on the back of the paper shows through
♦ Double feeding (missing sheets)
♦ Inaccurate or incomplete indexing so documents lost in the data mass

WHY YOU SHOULD OUTSOUCE YOUR SCANNING

A professional document scanning and archiving service will not make the mistakes identified because:

♦ The scanning operators have been properly trained
♦ The scanning equipment is of higher quality and professional grade
♦ There is the appropriate scanning equipment for the different types of scanning media
♦ The project will be organized so that the proper metadata is captured so the document may be easily found in the future
♦ The metadata indexing is accurate and verified
♦ **The professional document scanning service has verification processes to ensure high quality scanning and accurate indexing processes**

WHAT'S POSSIBLE WITH THE PROPER SCANNING EQUIPMENT

Most private organizations either can't afford or do not know the type of professional scanning equipment that a proper scanning and indexing process should have.

Paper Documents

An appropriate scanner for scanning medium volumes of paper documents might be the Fujitsu fi-6670 as shown to the right. This scanner has a large automatic paper feeder so that you can put up to 200 pages of up to 11 x 17" to be fed all at once. It will decide the proper paper size and it will also decide whether there is information on the back sides of the page that needs to be scanned. The image quality is excellent and with the "PaperStream" software that comes with the scanner text is shaded boxes and text under highlighter is still readable. This model has ultrasonic multi-feed detection so that it is almost impossible to double feed a page.

To find out more about Paperstream click here

Bound Books

For bound archival books the Minolta PS-7000 as shown to the left is an excellent choice. It can scan books up to 17" x 23". It can also scan both pages as individual pages or a "spread" of both pages. This scanner has black and white or greyscale capability and up to 600dpi resolution. With this scanner there is no more wear and tear on the book than just turning the pages.

Photos and Slides

The Epson Perfection V850 Pro Photo scanner as shown to the right can scan photos, slides and negative film at resolutions up to 6,400 dpi. It can scan up to sixteen 35mm slides at a time. The Epson Scan software that comes with it is powerful and easy to use. It also comes with DIGITAL ICE technology. ICE stands for "Image Correction and Enhancement" so you can greatly improve the image of old faded photos.

Large Format Drawings and Maps

The Vidar Select 600e as shown to the left will scan up to 36" wide by any length in black and white, greyscale or colour. The image quality is excellent with resolutions of up to 600 dpi. The powerful software included will assist in de-speckling and de-skewing.

Microfilm and Microfiche

The ScanPro 3000 will scan either 16mm or 35mm microfilm and microfiche with a high level of image quality with its 26 megapixel camera. The optical resolution is over 500 dpi. The powerful PowerScan 3000 software makes the scanning process easy and intuitive and allows image adjustment and cropping.

THE BENEFITS OF PROPER INDEXING

Once your documents, photos, slides, microfilm etc. are scanned it is very important that you are able to find the images in the future. This is where a professional scanning service can help. Trained staff and defined verification procedures will ensure that your metadata is complete and accurate. Proper file naming is very important. It is also important to define what metadata is required so that the document may be found in the future without adding too many metadata fields so that the indexing is a burden. Indexing standards must be adhered to such as deciding how dates are to be shown ie. yyyy/mm/dd or dd/mmm/yy, etc…. Once metadata standards have been determined it is now time to make decisions about how to find, view and share the data which will be described in the following section.

THE BENEFITS OF PROPER PUBLISHING

Once the metadata indexing has been performed it is time to make decisions about how you will find, view and distribute your information. There are a number of different options as follows:

Publishing of Photos and Slides

Once scanned photos and slides can be published by:

♦ Organized by file naming and folders on DVD for viewing on computer
♦ Published into a slideshow presentation for viewing on computer or TV
♦ MS Access database with links to the images
♦ Indexed into an electronic document management system such as FileHold (www.filehold.com)

Publishing of Paper Documents, Bound Books, Microfilm, Microfiche and Large Format Drawings

Paper documents may be published by:

♦ Adobe Acrobat PDF project with linked Table of Contents and full text search capability
♦ MS Access database with links to the documents and full text search capability
♦ Indexed into an electronic document management system such as FileHold (www.filehold.com)

SUMMARY

So as you can see there is a lot more to scanning than most people think. A professional scanning organization such as Image Advantage Solutions Inc. will ensure that the job is done accurately and professionally.

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