

Solutions

Moving From Paper to Digital

Documentation

The idea of moving from traditional paper to digital documentation may seem overwhelming. However, the benefits and savings of implementing a document management and scanning solution far exceed the costs of the technology and time for integration. A document management solution can off-set the costs of filing clerks, off-site storage, and also the time to retrieve information.

Many small to medium sized businesses generate hundreds to thousands of pages of documentation each day. In addition, there is also a large amount of documents received from outside sources. The documents must be filed and at some point, once the file is closed, the file is then archived and sent to storage. The problem with this process is the retrieval of the files and the retrieval of the documents within the file. This can be cumbersome and may be difficult to access information from within the files in a timely manner; therefore, many firms are implementing document management and scanning solutions. Each firm typically has different needs, so the solution may vary.

The method of entering, storing and retrieving the documents must be considered when implementing a document management solution. In order to enter the documents into the computer, either a multi-function printer (MFP) that has scanning capability, a digital copier with a scanner attachment or a scanner can be used. The software that scans the documents will either scan the documents as images or as editable documents. The documents can be stored on a hard drive in an organized file folder structure or burned to CD. To access and retrieve the documents a document management software such as, WORLDOX, or a

Metadata Removal Tools

Awareness and concern over metadata is on the rise. Metadata is hidden information contained in your documents that may be visible to recipients when they are emailed. Although metadata can be removed manually, this can be a cumbersome process. A better solution may be to implement one of the automated solutions being offered by various software manufacturers which stream-line the process of removing metadata from documents with little to no user interaction.

Microsoft explains that metadata can be stored in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint files. Upon creating and editing the files, hidden tags are embedded that track information about you and the edits that you make to your documents. Microsoft offers a Remove Hidden Data Tool that integrates with Microsoft Office XP and Office 2003. The Remove Hidden Data tool will require you to save another copy of your document prior to it being cleaned and can remove the following types of metadata: track changes, versioning, comments, hidden text, user names, Visual Basic macros, etc.

Metadata Scrubber, from BEC Legal Systems, offers an even more automated approach that works in conjunction with Microsoft Outlook and Microsoft Word 2000, XP, and 2003. When attaching a file to an email message, the scrubber will initiate the removal of the metadata upon sending the message. The Metadata Scrubber will remove track changes, versioning, comments, hidden text, user names, document properties, Visual Basic macros, etc. When running a Microsoft Exchange server, the Metadata scrubber can be customized to run in a silent mode with no user intervention required. The scrubber can also be run directly from Microsoft Word with the click of a button.

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Not All PDF Files Are Created Equal

Now that most people have adopted PDF as the standard file format for sending documents electronically, whether via email or through various websites; it is important to know when your files can or cannot be modified by the recipient. One of the primary reasons for sending files in PDF format is the belief that they cannot be changed. This is not true in all instances. Although PDF files are images that many of us open using the free Adobe Reader software, anyone who has purchased Adobe Standard Edition will be able to access and modify text within PDF files when a text layer exists.

One critical factor in determining whether or not text will be accessible within your PDF document is the manner in which it is created. PDF files can be created by scanning a “paper” document and saving the image as a PDF file, or they can be created by converting an “electronic” document into a PDF file.

When you scan to PDF, you can create an image of the document that does not contain a text layer. This means that the recipient of the file would not be able to edit the text without re-creating the document. However, you will need to make sure you haven’t performed OCR (Optical Character Recognition) on your scanned document, thus creating a text layer.

When you create a PDF file by converting it from a text format, such as Microsoft Word, the resulting PDF file typically has a text layer and anyone with Adobe Standard Edition can access the text and convert it to Word. The options available regarding securing your files will vary depending upon which conversion tool you use. If you use Adobe Standard Edition, you can modify the conversion settings to secure your document. You can choose to prevent the recipient of your file from copying text, prevent printing, and you can create a password required for opening the document.

The increased popularity of communicating electronically and collaborating on documents via email has “raised the bar” as to the care that must be taken to ensure you do not provide access to more than you intend. ☺

For more information contact Leslie Hennessy at ext 228.

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practice/case management software such as, Time Matters, make retrieving the documents easier.

The paperless office has been discussed for the past several years. With the advancements that have been made in technology and the affordability of the technology, moving from paper to digital documentation is now becoming more of a reality. ☺

For more information contact Alicia Slade at ext 202.

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Each product offers you a way to remove hidden data which is a more reliable than removing it manually. Please take the necessary precautions to verify the files that you are emailing do not contain sensitive metadata. Consider the Remove Hidden Data add-in or the Metadata Scrubber for peace of mind that your critical documents are not revealing too much when your associates receive your e-mail. ☺

For more information contact Stacie Sebeck at ext 211.

Digital Copiers on the Network

Digital copiers are physically much like the regular photocopiers that we are all very familiar with. They usually have many trays to hold various types and sizes of paper, a flat piece of glass where a scanner head travels along the source document(s), a place where multiple sheets can be fed in at once called an “ADF” or automatic document feeder, and some output bins where collating, sorting and stapling may take place. Not all digital copiers are alike, and they often come packaged as a ‘base’ unit with various modules and upgrades available as options; such as a fax board for turning it into a fax machine, or a network card for hooking onto the local area network. More importantly, digital copiers differ from traditional “analog” copiers in many ways, making them a much more affordable and versatile solution than the old workhorses of yesterday.

Some of the most important differences are:

- ❖ Digital copiers have fewer moving parts and do not need to make multiple ‘passes’ when scanning the image of the original. Instead, they simply scan the original once and store that image in memory where it can then be manipulated, stored on a

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server, and printed multiple times. This helps to reduce not only the noise that they make when working, but more importantly the frequency and cost of repairs.

- ❖ Digital copiers are much better at reproducing fine details and graphics, and can scale images to a much wider range than can traditional copiers.
- ❖ Digital copiers often connect to the local network or LAN, allowing multiple users to utilize them simultaneously from their workstations while also serving multiple functions such as a network printer, scanner and fax machine. This convergence of functions has become instrumental in the push toward the paperless office. Storing documents digitally on a server or other storage media helps the office productivity and workflow as they can now be accessed simultaneously from any workstation on the LAN without having to go pull them out of a file cabinet.
- ❖ When a fax module is added or included on a digital copier, it gives everyone on the network the ability to fax documents from their desktop without having to go to the fax machine. Some fax modules also allow incoming faxes to be routed to certain people or even to an e-mail account.

Having fewer devices to handle all of these various tasks also saves space and leads to a less cluttered work environment.

When considering the benefits that digital copiers bring to the workplace, you should keep in mind that having various functions available from one device makes that device highly popular. Multiple employees may need to use it at once. If you have a large volume of scanning or faxing, you might want to have an additional scanner or fax machine. Additionally, whenever a repair is necessary, all functions will be unavailable.

As we all move steadily toward the paperless office with all its promises of increased productivity and reduced overhead costs, we see that the digital copier will be one of the main vehicles that will take us there. The digital copier offers a way to help your business become more efficient by taking away the paper and keeping information at your fingertips. ☺

For more information contact Jeff Smereczniak at ext 214.

HP ScanJet 8250 & OmniPage Pro

Many technological improvements are helping to make the dream of a paperless workplace into a reality. Combining a high quality scanner, such as the HP ScanJet 8250, with document conversion/editing software, like OmniPage Pro Office 14 brings the paperless office one step closer. The ScanJet 8250 is a reliable and professional quality scanner that comes with the following standard features:

- ❖ 50-sheet Automatic Document Feeder
- ❖ 15 pages-per-minute & two-side scanning
- ❖ Scan to file, scan to email, & Optical Character Recognition (OCR)
- ❖ 4800 DPI & 48-bit color

Using the OmniPage Pro software with the ScanJet 8250 creates an affordable electronic document storage solution. OmniPage offers customizable workflows which ease the transition from hard copies to digital files, saving time and money during the shift to paperless. These documents can then be integrated into the workflow processes faster, allowing the electronic documents to be captured, classified, and sent almost anywhere instantaneously. Indexing electronic documents is another advantage to going paperless. This enables the documents to be searchable by desktop search engines and managed easily.

Document capture technology is a fast, simple, and reliable way to convert paper-based documents into electronic formats. This decreases labor, operational, and facility costs because there is less manual entry time and storage space needed. With quick and easy access to data, as well as the ability to focus people and resources on core business functions, the bottom line is improved even further. This time around, a paperless office environment is a real possibility, due to innovations like the HP ScanJet 8250 and OmniPage Pro Office 14. ☺



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WHAT'S HAPPENING...

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