imaging

Whitepaper

How Document Scanners Affect Productivity and Compliance

As enterprise content management (ECM) solutions become more prevalent and sophisticated, manufacturers of document scanning hardware are responding with enhanced functionality to meet the demands of technology and higher volume business processes. The volume of documents scanned continues to increase due to a number of trends, such as increased adoption of the shared services model (where multiple business units rely on a centralized corporate facility for a specific business process such as accounts payable). Concurrently, the processes being managed with electronic documents are becoming increasingly complex and subject to increasing regulatory compliance.

Market pressures to increase both productivity and corporate accountability need to be as a high a priority when choosing a scanner as they are when buying enterprise software. By understanding the implications of a scanner purchase on operational efficiency, a positive work environment and organizational risk, you can make a more informed decision that delivers return on investment (ROI) and supports your governance, risk and compliance initiatives.

The Role of Document Scanners in Driving Productivity

Document scanning is generally a starting point for other automated business processes such as workflow, so delays in getting documents into the system can affect productivity throughout the enterprise. In service bureau environments, paying workers who are idle due to scanner downtime increases the cost-per-scan and compromises the already lean margins associated with this kind of business. Achieving maximum scanner uptime depends on a combination of hardware functionality and human factors.

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THE POSSIBILITIES ARE INFINITE

Scanning productivity is based on a number of hardware features that go beyond the rated speed of the hardware. The duty cycle, for instance, indicates the intensity of usage a scanner is designed to withstand. For example, the new *fi*-5900C high-volume document imaging scanner from Fujitsu Computer Products of America, Inc. is capable of delivering a rated speed of 100 pages-per-minute (ppm) at 300 dots-per-inch (dpi) in portrait mode and in full color. In addition, the scanner has a daily duty cycle of up to 100,000 sheets per day to satisfy the demanding requirements of high-volume production scanning. A comparable competing product has the same rated speed, but the duty cycle is limited to 60,000 pages per day. Should the volume of documents spike because of business growth or a seasonal increase, the performance and warranty of the scanner with a 40% lower duty cycle could be compromised.

Most organizations find that the actual volume of documents scanned exceeds expectations. The success of a scanning project for one business unit may also prompt other areas to consider scanning. A scanner with a higher duty cycle gives you the flexibility to meet these demands without investing in new hardware or risking the hardware investment you've already made.

Scanning productivity is also affected by the types of documents being scanned and the actions of scanner operators. As the volume and variety of documents being scanned increases, some organizations experience delays and increased labor expenses due to document preparation. This often involves using a document jogger to make sure the edges of documents are aligned, sorting documents based on size, color or type and ensuring that all staples have been removed. As more organizations adopt intelligent document recognition to sort documents with virtually no human intervention, the necessity to sort documents in order to scan them becomes increasingly archaic.

To increase overall scanner operator productivity, the Fujitsu *fi*-5900C is designed with a built-in Active Stacking Tray that keeps your scanned documents neat and orderly. For example, in many organizations there may be a requirement to keep the original documents for some period of time although they have been digitized into an ECM system. In this case the scan operator would be required to place the original documents back into a file cabinet and/or into storage boxes. The Active Stacking Tray system eliminates the need to re-jog the documents so that they will fit neatly into your physical storage cabinets or boxes. Documents of differing sizes (up to 12" x 17" or long documents up to 34"), weights and colors can be placed in mixed batches directly on the feeder, which will align them. The latest version of Virtual ReScan (VRS) from Kofax Image Products, Inc., the de facto standard for image quality, is built into and optimized for the scanner. VRS automatically recognizes bi-tonal and color images and processes them accordingly on the fly, so operators spend less time handling documents and do not have to insert separator sheets or patch codes to prompt the scanner to recognize these document attributes.

The Fujitsu *fi*-5900C can recognize potential problems before they result in paper jams, damage to the scanner or the need to re-scan. Three ultrasonic multifeed detection sensors across the throat of the scanner serve to prevent lost images by detecting when two overlapping documents are fed through the scanner at the same time. These sensors can be set to send an audible alert to the operator and/or immediately stop the scanning process so there is no question which page in a large batch of documents might not have been captured. Because missed staples can cause serious damage to any document scanner, the Fujitsu *fi*-5900C has a detector that stops a document before it hits the rollers. By identifying these kinds of problems at the beginning of the process, operators aren't spending as much time troubleshooting the scanner and re-scanning documents.

No matter how good the technology, user acceptance and mastery are hard to obtain if the solution is too disruptive or doesn't fit into your current physical environment. The Fujitsu *fi*-5900C has features that appeal to operators, IT staff and those who work in the vicinity of a scanning

operation. The easy-to-use front control panel is very intuitive for operators, and the interface can be configured to streamline workflow, easing training requirements and reducing help desk calls. Because it is significantly quieter than previous models and 35% smaller than the Fujitsu award-winning *fi*-4990C, the *fi*-5900C is less physically demanding for operators.

The noise reduction and smaller footprint make it more practicable to locate the scanner in more convenient locations closer to other operational units. Connectivity options are also made much more flexible and less demanding as the Fujitsu *fi*-5900C supports USB 2.0 as well as Ultra Wide SCSI.

Just as with cars, routine maintenance and preventative care help to maintain performance and avoid costly unexpected failures. Scanners that can be attended to more quickly and conveniently and with less reliance on a service professional give your organization more control of scanning operations. Not only does the *fi*-5900C have a number of user-replaceable parts, the areas that can be manipulated are color-coded, making them easy to identify.

Regardless of the document scanner you purchase, regular professional checkups are critical. Fujitsu offers service packages for every budget and business need through its network of dedicated Fujitsu professionals who can offer onsite service nationwide in as little as four hours. However, Fujitsu has incorporated many features to make unplanned service calls less likely. For instance, the lamps used in the Fujitsu *fi*-5900C are rated for the life of the scanner, and the cameras have been sealed to prevent damage from dust.

Scanning Technology Supports Compliance and Risk Mitigation

Consistently creating high quality images, being able to verify that all images were scanned in a timely manner and protecting the original paper documents can be critical to the compliance and risk mitigation initiatives faced by nearly every organization. If internal or external auditors cannot find the image of the document they are looking for or the one they find is illegible, your organization's overall operational practices will be called into question. Yet many people overlook the role of document scanning hardware as part of corporate governance and accountability.

VRS increases the readability of documents that may not scan well because of light type or other factors. Combined with functions such as content-based auto-rotation of documents, smoothing of background colors and de-skewing, this increased readability helps to ensure that documents will be quickly available for review by eliminating the need for re-scans. Deadline-driven operations, such as insurance claims, electronic medical records, police incident reports or court filings, cannot afford the possibility of liability resulting from delays.

Fujitsu technology delivers additional features that contribute to ensuring flawless scans. The three ultrasonic multi-feed sensors can be separately configured to optimize capabilities for "problem" documents, such as excessively thin pages that otherwise enter the feeder together and prevent scanning of every page. Fujitsu has also increased the overscan control of the *fi*-5900C. By scanning a wider area outside of the prescribed paper path, the *fi*-5900C decreases the likelihood that the corners of a document will be cut off. Because a bar code, form number or other piece of vital information may be located in that corner, a defective scan may render the document image invalid.

Organizations dealing with extremely sensitive or high-value documents often require manual verification prior to committing a batch to a permanent electronic repository. Research indicates that color documents are preferred by verifiers and enhance their accuracy, but many organizations have business reasons for not wanting to rely solely on color images. The significantly larger size of these files requires more storage space and more bandwidth to transmit electronically. In addition, optical character recognition (OCR) software used for forms processing or full-text indexing generally does not support color images.

The dual stream capability of the *fi*-5900C allows users to have the best of both worlds by concurrently creating two versions of the same image for specific purposes. Consequently, an organization could produce a grayscale image for forms processing and a permanent electronic archive. A color image can be provided to verifiers and then disposed of after a quality control review. Dual streams provide you with greater flexibility in using images according to prescribed legal policies and best practices without sacrificing productivity.

Auditors and regulators may demand validation that best practices were followed in assuring that all documents were scanned and an audit trail created. The *fi*-5900C's page counter can be used to immediately ascertain that the number of documents in a batch is equal to the number scanned. Pre- and post-imprinters can provide even greater accountability. Bates stamps, dates and other data critical to proving that documents were handled appropriately can be permanently applied to the front or back of the document. These values can remain with the document as metadata for use in a content management solution.

For organizations dealing with irreplaceable original documents, Fujitsu has also taken steps to assure that invaluable paper documents aren't damaged during the scanning process. The *fi*-5900C's document protection feature detects when a document is about to jam and stops it from being accordioned and possibly even destroyed. This functionality detects the most delicate of documents, including material as thin and fragile as tissue paper.

Adopting a centralized scanning strategy supports the high level of consistency, quality and control required for demanding compliance and risk mitigation scenarios. Much of the technology simply isn't available in lower end hardware. Even when it is, ensuring that every scanning area has identical hardware configurations, operator training and business practices is hard to verify without centralized control of the process.

Recognized for continually raising the bar when it comes to price/performance among document scanners, Fujitsu has continued this tradition with its latest entry to the marketplace. Because customers' business needs drive technology development, Fujitsu has earned its status as a market leader. To find out more about how the latest high-volume scanning technology can improve your business, contact your Fujitsu reseller or visit www.fcpa.fujitsu.com.

About Fujitsu Computer Products of America, Inc.

Fujitsu Computer Products of America, Inc. is a subsidiary of Fujitsu Limited, a leading provider of customer-focused IT and communications solutions for the global marketplace. FCPA provides innovative solutions for the U.S. marketplace. Current product and service offerings include high performance hard-disk drives, magneto-optical drives, scanners, and scanner maintenance.

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