

Document Imaging Report

Business Trends on Converting Paper Processes to Electronic Format

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IBML Introduces New Version of ImageTrac

IBML has introduced a new flavor of its popular ImageTrac III high-speed scanner. The Birmingham, AL-based manufacturer has made changes in the areas of ergonomics and ease-of-use and introduced them under the new brand name ImageTrac 3e. The 3e made its debut at the recent **TAWPI** show in Orlando.

IBML worked with a “product design usability” engineer who videotaped and studied operators using the ImageTrac III. He studied problem areas that were bringing the device to a halt. “Speed is only one factor when considering the throughput of a scanner,” noted Derrick Murphy, CEO of IBML. “People focus on speed because they think if you can make something work faster, you can get more work done.”

“However, if you are not doing things the right way, more speed can lead to more problems. In addition to speed, users need to focus on getting work done more accurately. If you can reduce the number of rescans and the amount of rekeying you are doing in a capture operation, you ultimately end up with a better product.”

One of the ergonomic improvements IBML has made on the 3e is moving the touch screen and keyboard for managing the device to the center of the scanner. On the ImageTrac III, they are located near the feeder on the left side. The centralized location makes it faster for users to clear jams on either side.

The touch screen has also been mounted on a movable arm that can be rotated 90 degrees to either side, as well as moved up and down and forward

and backwards. A four-to-five-inch wide “work surface” has been mounted in front of the keyboard, where users can prep and repair documents for scanning and re-scans. These improvements have helped make the ImageTrac 3 more compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, which requires that IT implementations at federal agencies consider accessibility for people with disabilities.

The interface on the touch screen has been redesigned to ease the set up and management of scan jobs.

IBML has also made improvements involving the MICR reader, bar code reader, and pre-and post-scan imprinters. First, it has covered the exposed wiring on these devices, which is designed to reduce the intimidation factor for users who formerly had to work around this wiring when clearing jams on the scanning belt. IBML has also improved the design of the access cover for the bottom camera on the ImageTrac 3e. It can now be more easily opened for clearing jams.

The imprinters have been reconfigured to be less obtrusive. They have also been redesigned so the printer head can be automatically moved over the track through a command from the touch screen. This is designed to make the changing of printer cartridges easier.

On the ImageTrac 3e, the MICR reader can be disengaged when not in use. This enables thicker documents, and items like envelopes and flats, to pass more readily through the scanning process. The ImageTrac 3e’s document feeder has also been re-designed to account for thicker items like courier

envelopes.

On the other end of the scanner, IBML has implemented a larger “spindle” in its outsort pockets. This enables the device to handle thicker and longer documents with less jamming. Up to 24 outsorting pockets are available on the ImageTrac 3ex version of the scanner. The spindle is controlled through software.

Finally, IBML is more actively promoting JPEG 2000 compression technology with the ImageTrac 3e models.

The price of the 3e will be the same as that of the ImageTrac III—starting at \$125,000. The rated speed of both devices is 257 ppm in color, black-and-white, and grayscale at 200 dpi and 174 ppm at 300 dpi. IBML has no current plans to discontinue production of the ImageTrac III (which was launched in 2004, see *DIR* 1/9/04), although it is taking orders for the 3e and 3ex, which are due to ship in November.

“People may be wondering why we haven’t come out with any new products recently,” concluded Murphy. “We’ve been focused on taking our current products and making them more usable. With the ImageTrac 3e, we’ve focused on enhancements in three areas: improving throughput, improving operator productivity, and reducing cost for the end user by reducing service times and the time it takes to clear jams.”

In conjunction with the launch of the ImageTrac 3e models, IBML has also redesigned its logo and Web site.

<http://www.ibml.com/products/imagetrac3e.htm>