Automated Mailroom - no longer a vision of the future

Ashley Keil of ibml explains how adding intelligence to desktop scanners can revolutionise mailroom processes

The capture market has just seen the long awaited launch of ibml's new desktop scanner range, the ImageTracDS series. Long known as specialists in the enterprise capture space, ibml has now brought the advanced functionality and performance of its intelligent high-end ImageTrac platforms to these new desktop scanners. Now the desktop market has access to advanced scanning technology, which to date has only been available to high-end users.

Users continue to look for ways to optimise their capture processes. This is true, for example, within the traditional mailroom, where contrary to previous predictions, net paper volumes are on the increase, making them ripe for automation.

Traditional scanners have reached their limits in performance, remaining focused purely on speed and paper handling. The addition of intelligence to the desktop scanning process adds significant value to these core functions and introduces the ability to automate the larger cost and SLA capture overheads, which relate to business rules document preparation and physical document workflow.

Software to automate business rules scanning has been available for some years, primarily offered as a server based utility, which by definition takes place after scanning and as such loses any ability to apply business rules to the physical process of capture. The new ImageTracDS series come equipped with ibml's SoftTrac Capture Suite software, which provides the ability to recognise and extract content while scanning, react to a business rule, and affect not only the electronic routing of documents but also the physical routing of those documents.

This automated business rules based scanning is particularly important in the mailroom where, by definition as the entry point into an organisation, mail arrives as mixed content and needs to be sorted, both electronically and physically. Indeed, the modern mailroom receives content which drives the daily business process of an organisation, including, for example, order processing, new business applications, AP and so on. On this basis, the capture of the image content becomes all important and intelligent scanners enable this, using look-up tables and other external references to validate extracted content before supply to line of business systems. Failed extraction can be both electronically and physically rejected.

Our long experience in enterprise capture at ibml has contributed to the development of these new desktop scanners. The end result is a unique blend of software and hardware, which combines in the ImageTracDS series, providing the ability to meet the growing demand to automate all aspects of the capture process:

- The ImageTracDS series 'left aligned' feeding allows for scanning of mixed sized documents with minimal preparation, removing the need to place documents manually, and one at a time, in a scanner with central feed
- SoftTrac Capture Suite allows the scanner to sort documents physically and place in to different pockets, eliminating much of the manual sorting required by document preparation staff.
- State of the art camera technology ensures optimum image quality, in-turn providing excellent recognition results.

These high quality images also assist staff involved in the Quality Control process, ensuring they have clear detail to work with, whether in thumbnail form or enlarged for enhanced examination. The end result is a scanner that can process more documents in a shorter time frame, with less operator overhead and resulting in significant reduction of cost. Those users who are already experiencing an ImageTracDS scanning platform have achieved a typical reduction of 50 percent in cost for their front end capture costs.

It's worth noting that the ImageTracDS series can be purchased as a standard scanner and integrated with third party Scan Client software using both the TWAIN and ISIS (soon to be released) driver standards. Importantly the scanner can be upgraded to an 'Intelligent' scanner at any point in time, future-protecting its users.

More info: www.ibml.com