



Rise of the easy integrators

With ibml adding ISIS and TWAIN drivers to its high volume desktop production range, DM Magazine editor David Tyler sought out Ashley Keil, the company's sales director for Northern & Western Europe, Africa & India to find out what's new with their intelligent scanners

David Tyler: Is intelligent scanning a concept central to the appeal of your new desktop offerings?

Ashley Keil: Intelligence for me in the capture world means three distinct things: manual, server or scanner-based intelligence.

Manual, of course, is everything being done physically - staff inserting separator sheets, looking at every document to validate and check them and so on. Clearly this is cumbersome, inefficient, slow and ultimately hugely expensive.

With a server-based approach, users may have an IDR (Intelligent Document Recognition) engine for instance which does some of the document analysis for them 'on the fly'. This helps users to remove certain overheads like manual document classification, keying of metadata, separator and insertion costs but there are still a significant number of things that operators have to do manually such as locate and extract documents that have failed a business rule.

Shifting the 'intelligence' to the actual capture device - the scanner - means a fully automated software and hardware approach. The scanner can do many of the things that a server focused IDR solution does but it adds a physical reaction where the server approach falls short. For instance, the scanner can automatically out-sort defined documents or reject incorrect transactions pulling out documents from a batch, for example,

where a customer hasn't signed a form where the business process requires it. This reduces processing costs even more and, from a ROI perspective, our customers should see a tangible difference to their operations very quickly.

DT: How is this approach reflected in your recent announcements?

AK: The market has always known ibml for its very high volume ImageTrac scanners. Now we've launched ISIS and TWAIN drivers for our high volume desktop production scanners - the DS 1155 and DS 1210 scanner models - which extend the value of these popular devices by enabling easy integration with most third party document capture solutions. It is this integration which is key. It means end-users can take advantage of higher speeds and performance as part of a total document management solution even with all the intelligent processing functions switched on.

These scanners are fast: the DS 1155 scanner is able to process up to 155 pages per minute (ppm) with the DS 1210 rated to process up to 210 ppm making it one of the fastest desktop production scanners in the world.

This makes them ideal for use in a range of industries. This includes banking, insurance, healthcare, government and BPOs where the necessity to lower paper digitising costs is critical, and

organisations require a scalable platform which is easy to implement and can be easily upgraded to automate key business processes at the point of capture. The DS series scanners are perfect for digital mail rooms and other environments where space is at a premium and the workload high.

Our customers can now take advantage of these intelligent scanners to replace existing standard desktop scanners within their existing capture solution, ensuring no productivity loss with existing users.

DT: How does the DS range help customers like BPOs to add value to their operations and save money?

AK: I would say that customers' document capture needs are changing. Whilst clearly fast scanning for archival purposes is still required, many customers want to augment this and incorporate scanned information directly into their business workflows which by definition have business rules attached to the capture process. Those business rules can be automated with intelligent scanning technology.

The staff time to deal with documents pre and post scanning contributes to more than 75% of the total cost of scanning. We've added intelligence features designed to cope with the most demanding scanning environments and which help our customers to reduce their total cost of capture.

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In addition, the DS scanners come with a variety of other features perfect for demanding scanning environments. For example our multi feed detection uses up to five ultrasonic sensors. A simple example of why this is helpful is where users need to scan envelopes. We're seeing this more and more either for audit trail purposes or to initiate a transaction so envelope handling on the DS devices is highly sophisticated. In addition the ability to handle long documents up to 150 cm makes the DS range perfect for healthcare use where ECG medical records are being digitised.

DT: Can you give me a simple end-user example of how scanner intelligence works in practice?

AK: We work with a service provider company who supports charities, managing donations so they make the best use of every penny given by donors. Payments come into their mail room in various formats: cheque, credit card and Charities Aid Foundation vouchers which make up approximately 10% of payments received. Their DS scanner is set to process these vouchers using inbuilt intelligence.

As post comes in, it is prepared and scanned and the software automatically captures significant field data such as the payment amount, donor details, Gift Aid eligibility, and then validates the figures and generates a payment slip. Name and

address details are also captured as part of the workflow process. There are various benefits. Firstly, payments are processed faster which means the charities get their funds quicker. Secondly, the accuracy of captured data is improved. Thirdly, PCI compliance requirements are met. And lastly, the service provider has been able to respond to donors promptly to thank them which encourages repeat giving to its charity customers.

DT: Is there a simple migration path for companies buying DS scanners?

AK: This is the ethos behind what we are doing. Not only can customers upgrade the speed from 155 to 210 ppm but the DS series enables users to migrate from traditional scanning approaches which will allow them to use our scanners initially as they might use any other scanner today - just to scan documents - and then add intelligence to derive greater value.

DT: What is the market asking for from ibml and indeed the capture industry and how does intelligent scanning help?

AK: If you talk to many organisations - particularly BPOs - their main business aim is to move away from archival scanning and into what's now commonly known a day-forward business. This allows them to not only add value to what they do but generate additional

revenue. Most firms we deal with are moving this way. This means a need for intelligent capture as it drives efficiency and margin for them.

We can help those users build towards more intelligent capture at their own pace, adding speed and intelligence capabilities as they need with most people now very aware how much can be saved by automating a lot of the traditional pre and post prep tasks. Our proposition - building intelligence into our scanner hardware as well as by using software - really augments this. It gets information into systems earlier in the capture process and really helps with not only ROI but SLAs by reducing the length of time for approvals or validation processes.

In summary, our DS series is a disruptive technology in scanning that delivers greater value and benefits yet with a financial investment similar to our customers' current default scanner vendors. They help reduce the cost of document scanning and go a long way to future protect users whose scanning needs are changing day by day as the DM market becomes ever more focused on day forward business-process based applications where it is the content of a document rather than just the scanned image which is important. And users get high performance and robust equipment at no extra cost - which is obviously key.
More info: www.ibml.com