

Case Study



nextScan Technology Turns Potential Disaster into Rousing Success

Microform Imaging Ltd. provides one of the most comprehensive multi-document scanning and filming services in the UK. Microform Imaging's services are driven by the information management needs of its customers – ultimately to reduce cost, improve efficiency and enhance secure access to essential records. As a premier service bureau in the UK, Microform Imaging is able to scan all types of documents, from small receipts to large format drawings in a variety of file types – including microfilm – and provide complementary software to manage those digital documents after the conversion process.

THE CHALLENGE

In December of 2011 Microform Imaging was approached by a large Register Office in Northern England to scan 16,000 Birth, Marriage and Death records. These historic records consisted of 1.9 million bound pages, and the requirement was to scan and digitize these pages within the span of two years for easy search and retrieval. Adding to this monumental task, the client required that the original records remain at the Register Office during the conversion process due to their sensitive nature and the need to access these records on a regular basis. These specific requirements posed a unique challenge for any company that would take on the conversion work, as all scanning tasks would have to be performed at the client site.

How best to approach and complete this job in the most cost effective manner, within the time frame allocated? Microform Imaging performed several speed and functionality tests to identify the best approach for converting these priceless records, and determined that microfilming the records first and then scanning those microfilmed records to produce a digital file would be the most efficient method to minimize the on-site time, while complying with the client's requirement of not removing the original records from its premises. Additionally to reducing the on-site time required, the Client liked and highly appreciated the idea of a microfilm backup to all the original records.

Six months into the conversion project, the microfilm scanner being used to convert the filmed images of the original records to a digital format was struggling to keep up with the microfilming being produced, and Microform Imaging was falling behind schedule. With the existing scanner, images were being lost during the scan process. Much time was being consumed performing rescans as a result, and an inordinate amount of time was being taken with the QA process to ensure no images were being missed. This sort of human intervention in the scan process was exactly why the job would not be finished in time if Microform Imaging continued to use its current film scanner. A better solution had to be found.

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THE SOLUTION

In March of 2012 Microform Imaging Director, Jonathan Le Page, and Production Manager, Neil Bowker, visited the CeBIT Exhibition in Germany - in search of alternative scanning solutions that would address the difficulties currently faced with their conversion work at the Register Office. Additionally, Mr. Le Page and Mr. Bowker wanted to acquire leading technology that would not only combat their existing challenge of frequent QA and rescan issues that were causing painful and costly delays, but that would provide better throughput and workflow flexibility for future conversion jobs, allowing Microform Imaging to take on more film scanning work, lower cost of conversion, and ultimately add to the company's bottom line in increased customer satisfaction and profits.

After carefully evaluating all options offered by all the manufacturers of microfilm production scanners, meeting with each of them at the exhibition, they selected the nextScan Eclipse scanner for its innovative scanning technology and workflow.

"We were immediately impressed by this scanner's speed of operation, robustness and cutting-edge design" said Jonathan and Neil. Further discussion and demonstration of the NextStar workflow software that accompanies the Eclipse scanner convinced Microform Imaging that nextScan technology was the solution to their predicament at the Register Office, and that this technology could carry them in to the future in a profitable fashion on other conversion projects.

The Eclipse 16/35mm roll film scanning solution provides a complete package of hardware, software, training and support to provide the fastest throughput and highest quality digital images. The Eclipse system includes the scanner, PC, high resolution lens, NextStar Workflow Software, on-site training and long term support. The scanner features some unique patented technology that causes its users to have an edge in production conversion environments, such as a patented film transport to ensure highest linearity, a patented LuminTec LED strobe light illumination system for the best resulting image quality, and can yield throughput speeds of up to 1000 images per minute, depending on the specific Eclipse model.

"The Eclipse scanner, combined with the NextStar Workflow Software provided optimum speed and significantly reduced conversion costs by minimizing operator setup and QA, all while eliminating the need for rescans. All image data was captured initially in grayscale as a "Ribbon", so image enhancements were performed at the audit workstation, enabling optimum scan and processing time and speed, ultimately resulting in great quality of output and accuracy of the overall process. These capabilities proved essential to allow Microform Imaging to complete the job successfully at the Register Office in time and within budget." added Jonathan.

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THE RESULT

The fact that the NextStar workflow software technology completely eliminates the need for rescans, combined with the production throughput and image quality delivered by the Eclipse scanner due to its unique illumination system LuminTec, provided Microform Imaging the assurance that they had found the solution to their problem. "The Ribbon technology employed by the NextStar software was a revolution and straight away we noticed an impressive increase in our throughput, a significant cut in QA times, and an elimination of the painful rescans, not only for this project but also for our Academic Publishing Division which scans very old and diverse material on microfilm" stated Jonathan. "From the first moment of operation we have never looked back. Scan and processing times have reduced to one fifth what they used to be with the previous technology for 100ft 35mm microfilm. QA was possible on separate machines from the scanner with the auditing software provided, and re-scanning was completely eliminated.

We were able to catch up on the microfilm scanning for the Register Office project within a month and increase our throughput of microfilm processing for the Academic Publishing division at the same time. The Client was exceptionally pleased with the quality of the images produced as we were at Microform Imaging. Due to the nature of the innovative NextStar Ribbon scanning technology and the 'blackout' feature, which shows any potentially detection problems, Microform Imaging could confidently assure our client that no images were ever missed at the scanning stage – simply a wonderful tool without a doubt. The project would not have been completed on time and under budget without the Eclipse scanner." added Jonathan.

ABOUT NEXTSCAN

nextScan is a world leader in cutting edge technology for the micrographics conversion and document management industry. Incorporated in 2002, nextScan was established to give the microfilm and microfiche conversion market a high performance alternative to existing technologies. nextScan's innovative patented products are designed and built with simplicity and functionality to increase user production and lower overall costs for scanning film and fiche.

Designed with cutting edge components – the latest in camera, lighting, image correction, and NextStar PLUS, nextScan's revolutionary "Ribbon" scanning software, NextStar PLUS. nextScan products deliver an unmatched return on investment with over 80 years of combined Micrographics Development experience, nextScan's lead engineers are proud to bring you the next generation of high performance Scanners and Software Solutions.

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