

## Looking for Scanners?



As we have traveled around the State, many of you have asked us what to look for (and, frankly, what to look out for) regarding scanning equipment. Here are some helpful hints:

As with any records project, the most important thing you can do is review your **workflow**. Hopefully, adding scanning equipment will change or enhance the way papers move through your office, but even if it doesn't, you still need to know how papers move so that you can properly size the equipment. Don't forget the old story of the man who went to buy a microwave and asked if this would make him a better cook. "No", said the salesperson, "it will just make you a faster bad cook!"

The next thing that you want to review is the kind of documents that you are working with and intend to scan. If you always have simple, one sided, 8.5 x 11 documents, then your choices are easy. Since that only fits about one tenth of you, the rest of us are looking for different things. Two sided documents? - you need to ask for **duplex** capability. This will allow you to scan both sides of the document at the same time without turning it over.

Some of you need to have high speed capability for most of your documents but are not allowed to take apart certain records that come into your office. At that point, you have two choices. The cheapest, but least efficient, is to get a **flatbed** scanner. This will work like a copy machine and give you good images. There are a number of scanners on the market, however, that will give you **high speed scanning** (you can stack a number of documents on the machine and it will run automatically) and flatbed scanning at the same time (lift the lid and it works like a photocopy machine).

Some of you have regular paper documents in the file along with 3 x 5 cards and you want to stack the file on the machine and have it scan all of the documents without having to re-set the scanner. There are scanners that will do this but let your sales people know that is what you are looking for.

Some scanners allow you to read bar codes. If you have that need or foresee it in the future, ask for it. Similarly, if you need to scan in color, ask for it as well. Conversely, don't let someone sell you bar code capability or color scanning if you have no need for it.

Also, get all the speed you need but don't buy something that is overkill. For example, if your workflow calls for a scanner on each person's desk, you should not, generally, be looking for a scanner that scans in duplex at 100 pages a minute. Looking at this in reverse, however, if you are an office that has a huge volume of documents to scan and your workflow calls for you to scan at only one station, you should be looking to get a high volume scanner that will handle that workload.

Make certain that your scanner can deal with “greyscales” and make certain that you can scan, at a minimum, of 200 dpi (dots per inch) in a true scan. And always - always - talk with your Information Technology professional to make certain that the scanner you buy matches with the software that you are using.

These are a few helpful hints so that you can get all of the scanner that you need without breaking the bank by getting a lot of what you don't need. Preparing good questions for good sales people will allow that person to right size the machines that will make your office most efficient.

As always, however, if you need additional help, call us. We love to hear from you.