

Choosing the Right Document Capture Solution

Many healthcare companies consider the decision to move towards an Electronic Health Records (EHR) system to be daunting. The use of advanced technology in medical treatments is widely relied upon and has greatly benefitted patients and practitioners alike. But while medical technology continues to progress with ever-increasing speed, the use of technology for patient records, administrative paperwork and business processes have only been adopted on a small scale because of its perceived cost, commitment in time and labor, and a hesitation to change the way that things have always been done.

The reality is that EHR technology has matured, and adoption is on the rise sparked by demonstrated success at improving medical care, reducing costs and errors, and making life-saving information available when and where it is needed. The United States Government has also acknowledged the benefits, and has provided significant funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) to help offset the costs of acquiring and implementing these solutions. The earliest adopters will benefit the most as the grants will decline over time, and eventually penalties may be imposed for those that do not comply.

The success of any EHR system can be tied to the quality of the data that is entered. If poor records are entered for digital storage, poor results will ensure. To set your healthcare organization on the right foot means capturing your new and existing records with quality and productivity in mind. Modern document capture systems have made the process even easier, and are able to accurately process medical records in high quality with minimal training and user intervention.

What to Look For

Document capture systems have become much more sophisticated than the simple scanning devices that are typically available at national retail outlets. The right device will make the task of processing all your health records and document workflows easier and more productive long into the future.



*Mr. Eric James Scritchfield
Canon U.S.A Healthcare Specialist
Image Filing Systems Division*

To help you better assess your needs and make an informed decision, we consulted with industry-expert Mr. Eric James Scritchfield, Healthcare Specialist of Canon U.S.A.'s Image Filing Systems Division. According to Mr. Scritchfield, the primary questions that you should ask in identifying the ideal document capture system are:

- How will the scanner be used? What types of documents need to be scanned, and what software application will you be scanning into?
- Where will it be placed? Front office, back office, nurses' station, Admissions? This will help determine the scanner footprint.
- How many documents will be scanned per day from each scanner? 100, 500, 1000 documents or more?
- What are the typical dimensions of the documents you will be scanning?

Distributed Systems Closer to the Point-Of-Care

Consider the most customer-facing portion of typical healthcare companies—Admissions and Front Desk operations. Staff is typically handling patient information sheets, health insurance and identification cards, and other mixed-sized documents. Capturing such a wide variety of types can be difficult and cumbersome using common personal or flatbed scanners, especially if the documents are double-sided.

“Consider a device that can easily handle single and double-sided documents and ‘hard’ cards in mixed batches,” said Mr. Scritchfield. “A popular device in use today is the Canon imageFORMULA DR-2510C Compact Document Scanner, which can capture at up to 25 pages-per minute and even documents of up to 39.4” in length such as EKG strips. One of the most common errors is a double-feed, where two or more pages are inadvertently pulled into the device at once. Often this goes undetected unless the document is reviewed following scanning. To overcome this problem, devices such as the imageFORMULA DR-2510C include an Ultrasonic Double-Feed Detection feature, which can provide automatic and unattended recovery.”



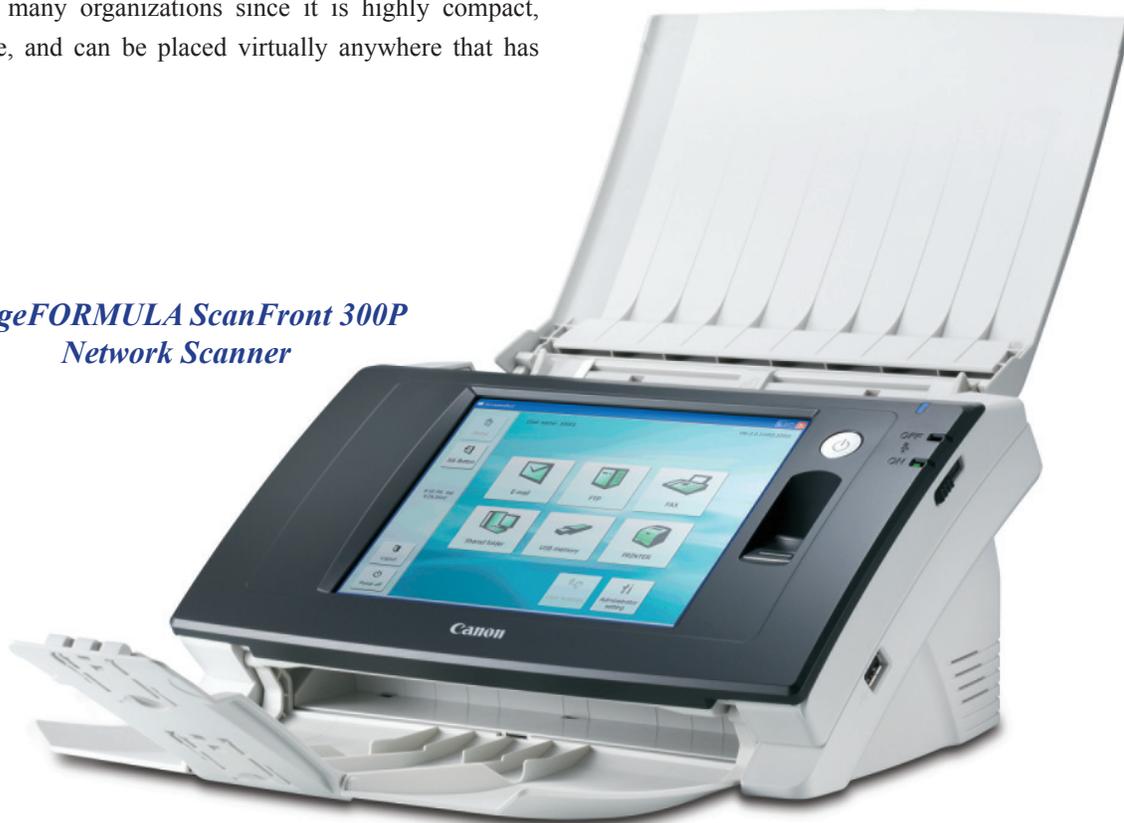
***imageFORMULA DR-2510C
Compact Document Scanner***

For some healthcare organizations, it is more desirable to use a document capture device that does not require a host desktop computer. Network-based scanners can be programmed to directly connect to the EHR system or back-office application, and are often operated through user-friendly touch panel displays. As stand-alone systems, they can be shared by many users in the most convenient location.

“The Canon imageFORMULA ScanFront 300P has been beneficial to many organizations since it is highly compact, simple to use, and can be placed virtually anywhere that has

a network connection,” continued Mr. Scritchfield. “The need for maintaining privacy for health records is vital, and the integrated biometric fingerprint reader saves time by enabling users to quickly login and scan the documents they need. The device can also be programmed with pre-configured workflows to automatically route documents and automate frequent tasks, as well as enhanced software to perform post-processing tasks on scanned documents to save time and increase fidelity.”

*imageFORMULA ScanFront 300P
Network Scanner*



Centralized, Production-Class Systems

Back-office scanning operations typically need more robust capabilities, higher accuracy and more durable document capture solutions because of larger batch sizes, higher volume demands, and speed requirements. Depending on need, production-level devices can scan documents as fast as 100+ pages per minute with high accuracy. This is especially useful in organizations that

handle a large number of documents, as well as those who are back-scanning past medical records.

“Many healthcare companies have turned to the imageFORMULA DR-X10C Production Document Scanner by Canon because of its ability at handling many legacy document types,” said Mr. Scritchfield. “The device can capture up to 130 pages per minute in high quality, aided by an innovative dust-free scanning system and multiple Ultrasonic Double-Feed Detection sensors for longer and more unattended operation.”



*imageFORMULA DR-X10C
Production Document Scanner*

Avoid the Pitfalls

Conversely, there are risks in choosing a less-than-ideal document capture system, especially if a large number of records or older originals will be handled. Some examples that could affect the integrity of your information include illegible captures, irreparable damage to fragile documents, or missing pages due to multiple sheets being fed at once. Productivity can also be hindered based on your choice of a document capture system when you consider its paper capacity, scanning speed, and exception handling for misfeeds and more.

“It is a costly proposition to go back and rescan documents that were not handled properly the first time, and potentially devastating if records are lost or destroyed in the process,” said Mr. Scritchfield. “The best defense in protecting the integrity of your medical records and achieving the productivity gains of an EHR system is to rely upon the right tool for the right job. While

many off-the-shelf scanning solutions may save you money upfront, the long-term cost and time to implement can easily overshadow that decision.”

Be EHR-Ready

Even if your organization is not planning an EHR implementation in the foreseeable future, you can still get a jump start on the process at your own pace and be better positioned when you are ready.

“For those not ready to take the plunge, I recommend at a minimum storing all new medical records in a document management system or a secure network file server in the event a record is unavailable, lost, damaged, stolen or misplaced,” concluded Mr. Scritchfield. “Not only will this provide the baseline for a contingency plan, but it will make the inevitable migration to EHR much easier.” ●