



Case Study

FamilySearch advances the art and science of genealogical photo capture

New solution from Kodak Alaris accelerates worldwide photo scanning and preservation initiative while protecting fragile family photos

Situation

FamilySearch, the largest genealogy organization in the world, wanted to increase the speed with which it could scan family photos while at the same time protecting the often fragile photos from damage.

Objective

Implement a high-volume production scanning solution that could deliver outstanding image quality with no risk of damage to the photos.

Solution

More than 25 **Kodak** Picture Saver Scanning System PS80s with **Kodak** Legal Flatbed Accessory Scanners and **Kodak** Photo Selector Accessory.

Results

FamilySearch is able to capture photos at a faster rate than ever before, including the scanning of multi-photo album pages from which individual images are automatically extracted and saved. In the first three months following installation of the first four units - nearly 40,000 photos had already been scanned, with one staffer commenting that, "I have never seen a single picture damaged."

On a mission to record family photographic history

FamilySearch is the largest genealogy organization in the world. Under the guidance of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), often referred to as the Mormon Church, FamilySearch maintains an exhaustive collection of records, resources, and services aimed at helping church members and the general public learn more about their family histories.

The organization gathers, preserves, and shares genealogical records worldwide, including photos and stories. It offers free access to its resources and services online at **FamilySearch.org**, one of the most heavily used genealogy sites on the web. FamilySearch also offers personal assistance at 4,700+ family history centers in 125 countries, including the Family History Library at its headquarters in Salt Lake City, UT.

FamilySearch cites the beliefs of the LDS that families are meant to be central to people's lives, and that family relationships are intended to continue beyond this life. "On a gravestone you see a birthdate, a dash, then a date of death," says Scott Lloyd, Desktop Engineer for Patron and Partner Services at FamilySearch. "FamilySearch and our genealogical and photo preservation efforts are all about helping people discover, describe, and remember what happened during that 'dash.'"

Pursuing production scanning

At FamilySearch, photo scanning was previously accomplished on flatbed scanners in a very time-consuming process. The organization was familiar with production scanning, but worried that fragile, older documents and pictures could be damaged by a traditional scanning procedure.

Needing a better solution, FamilySearch began to explore other types of photo scanners on the market. They purchased three **Kodak** Picture Saver Scanning Systems PS810 as a first step into higher-volume photo scanning.

"One situation we still needed to overcome was that many photos brought to our family history centers and headquarters are in very old albums," says Lloyd. "It would be dangerous to try to take brittle photos that might be 100 years old out of album pages, so we were also looking for a good solution to this issue."

This is where E-Z Photo Scan of Altamonte Springs, FL comes in. E-Z Photo Scan are document imaging experts that started their business capturing sensitive medical records for healthcare facilities across the US. Their team has scanned millions of personal photographs as an Authorized Document Conversion Center and Reseller for Kodak Alaris. The company provides a complete line of **Kodak** Scanners and expertise to those looking to do their own scanning, have it done for them, or both.

A much-needed productivity boost from Kodak Alaris

Recently, FamilySearch and E-Z Photo Scan both attended the RootsTech Conference in Salt Lake City. FamilySearch management visited the E-Z Photo Scan booth and learned how new software advances, and photo scanner models from Kodak Alaris, could

benefit FamilySearch's worldwide photo scanning initiative.

After the two organizations collaborated at a public photo scanning project operated by FamilySearch during the Federation of Genealogical Societies convention in Fort Wayne, IN, E-Z Photo Scan worked closely with Kodak Alaris to swap out FamilySearch's **Kodak** Picture Saver Scanning Systems PS810 for three new **Kodak** Picture Saver Scanning System PS80 units.

In terms of enhancements, the new system offers a number of productivity-boosting features. First, the flatbed accessory permits safe scanning of fragile photos and entire pages of photo albums, without having to remove individual pictures or even take a plastic sheet cover off a page of images. In conjunction, the **Kodak** Photo Selector Accessory automatically extracts individual images from a composite image, like multi-photo album pages. It then saves each photo as a separate digital file.

Productivity was increased with a real-world scanning rate of up to 85 images per minute, and a specially designed, straight-path, gentle transport that handles each picture with extreme care. "We have scanned thousands of photos," Lloyd notes, "and I have never seen a single picture damaged." He also praises the Optical Character Recognition (OCR) functionality of the **Kodak** Picture Saver Scanning System PS80, which allows users and staff to capture text on photos and documents, then save the image as a searchable PDF.

FamilySearch finds the ideal solution

Chris Hart, Client & Project Development Manager at E-Z Photo Scan, echoes Lloyd's assessment of Kodak Alaris' scanning solutions. "We have tested many photo scanning products and know that the **Kodak** Picture Saver Scanning Systems are

hands-down the best, and an excellent fit for FamilySearch," he says. "Before we recommend anything to a customer, we do extensive independent testing, and we knew that this was the ideal solution for the specific needs of FamilySearch."

Within the 4,700+ FamilySearch global locations, there are 14 large FamilySearch Libraries with three now operating an on-site **Kodak** Picture Saver Scanning System PS80. "Individuals will bring in 400 to 500 pictures and they will be scanned with outstanding quality in 15 minutes or so," Lloyd says. "We have now ordered 20 more PS80 Systems through E-Z Photo Scan to send out to additional centers because the ease of operation is excellent and satisfaction with the captured images is very high."

At their Salt Lake City headquarters, FamilySearch is now creating a photo experience area near the main entrance to generate greater awareness of their photo scanning initiative and capabilities. This will allow the organization to better utilize two of the PS80 Systems that were somewhat hidden away on a lower floor and not being fully utilized.

Patrons create family trees of ancestors on **FamilySearch.org**. Now they have the ability to place photos and stories of ancestors into the family trees, rather than just names and words. The combination of written descriptions and high-quality scanned photos creates a rich, interesting profile for current and future generations to view and enjoy.

"We have been very pleased with our PS80 Systems ... now we have the resources and capabilities to take our photo scanning and preservation initiatives to the next level in ways that please our patrons because their precious photos are gently and quickly scanned," said Lloyd.

Want to learn more?

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