

Document Imaging Report

Business Trends on Converting Paper Processes to Electronic Format

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December 3, 2004

Panasonic Turns Up Heat In The LVP Space

New camera configuration brings color to proven platform.

Panasonic is playing a pretty fair game of follow-the-leader in the low-volume production (LVP) document scanner space. This summer, we touted segment-leader **Fujitsu's** fi-5650C as featuring a "game-changing price point," with a list of \$5,995 [see *DIR* 8/20/04]. Well, Panasonic recently introduced an LVP model that carries the same list price and is actually rated slightly faster than the 5650. Panasonic is also touting differentiating features like auto-color detect, multi-color dropout, a replaceable lens, extra long (up to 183.3 feet) document capabilities, and an optional pre-scan imprinter.

The new KV-S3065C is the sheetfed-only version of the KV-S7065C that Panasonic introduced at **AIIM 2004**. It's probably worth noting that the 7065 was introduced at the same time as Fujitsu's fi-5750C—another LVP model with a flatbed [see *DIR* 3/26/04].

The body and feeder of Panasonic's 3065 is similar to that of its KV-S2065 series, which the 3065 is designed to replace. Inside the new scanner is the innovative technology that debuted on the 7065. This involves a CCD (charged coupled device) camera configuration packaged in a CIS (contact image sensor) arrangement.

"In the document scanner industry, CIS configurations have traditionally used CMOS (complementary metal oxide semiconductor) cameras with LED



Panasonic's new KV-S3065C brings high-speed color capabilities to the proven design of its KV-S2065 model.

lighting, all packaged in a unit covered by a lens," said Gary Bailer, product manager for Panasonic. "To capture an image with this configuration, a document is passed directly against the lens. This is in contrast to traditional CCD configurations, where mirrors are used to reflect fluorescent light off a lens, and the paper does not come directly into contact with the lens.

"For the camera system in the KV-SX065C series, we are using a traditional CIS configuration, but with CCD components. We have the CCD camera, fluorescent lamps, and the lens all housed in one unit. The paper passes directly over the lens, and there are no mirrors; so, technically, it's a CIS configuration."

According to Bailer, this provides the best of both worlds. "We've achieved the smaller footprint, lower power consumption, and lower warm-up time traditionally associated with CIS scanners, while achieving the brighter lighting and better image quality associated with CCD configurations."

As a result, Panasonic has been able to leverage the design of its CIS models, such as the 2065, in more powerful newer models like the 3065. Basically, Panasonic has been able to introduce color capabilities into proven designs. The 3065 is rated at 65ppm/120ipm at 200 dpi in both color and bi-tonal modes. The 2065 was a bi-tonal only scanner with slightly slower speeds.

To complement the color capability of the 3065, Panasonic has incorporated the auto-color detect and multi-color dropout capabilities first introduced in the 7065. It has also been able to continue several of the differentiating features of the 2065. These include the extra-long document capabilities, a c-shaped paper path with an elevator transport, a changeable black or white background, and a straight paper-feeding mode.

Like the 2065, the 3065 is available in both legal and ledger

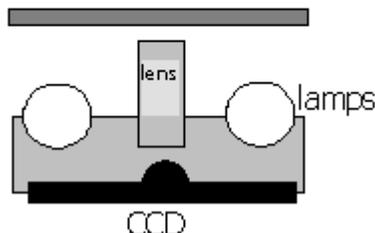
models, with the ledger designed to handle wider documents. At \$6,995, the ledger version, the KV-S3065CW, lists for \$1,000 more than the KV-S3065CL. According to Bailer, the majority of 2065s sold were legal sized models.

Panasonic Touts Post-Scan Imprinter, Replaceable Lens

New for the 3065, Panasonic has introduced an optional pre-scan imprinter. "Most of our competition offers post-scan imprinters," said Bailer. "A pre-scan imprinter is important in government applications where you need a way to show that archived copies represent the originals. Obviously, a post-scan imprint does not show up on a scanned image. It's my belief that pre-scan imprinter requirements are going to show up in some applications involving homeland security."

New Hybrid CIS Unit

Exchangeable Lens Cover



According to product manager Gary Bailer, Panasonic's new camera design makes old CCD vs. CIS comparisons obsolete. The system used in the KV-SX065C series of scanners utilize traditional CCD components in a CIS design.

Bailer added that the replaceable lens could also be a differentiator. "This is designed as protection against staple scratches that occur over time because document preparation is often far from perfect," said Bailer. "Eventually, when you scan enough documents with staples in the same place, as they go over the same spot on the lens, a scratch will develop. We've made it inexpensive and fairly simple to replace that lens."

Panasonic has also made an effort to save its customers maintenance costs by including a one-year Express Exchange warranty package with the 3065.

In addition to the aforementioned color capabilities (which are performed in software in a post-scan process), the 3065 includes Panasonic's PIE image processing application, which features grayscale thresholding. For users who want to utilize **Kofax's** popular VRS image processing, it is available for a list price of around \$1,600. Like Panasonic, Kodak bundles its own image processing technology in its LVP line, while Fujitsu bundles VRS—which may give Fujitsu a competitive advantage in environments where VRS has been standardized on.

However, in non-VRS environments, the 3065 seems to stack up very nicely against Fujitsu's 5650. And both the Fujitsu and Panasonic sheetfed-only models have a distinct price advantage over Kodak's latest entry in the LVP

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Vol. 14, No. 23

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segment—the i280.

Panasonic might not have the largest share of the scanner market, but its recent product introductions, at least show it intends to be competitive. And according to Bailer, more new products leveraging the new CCD/CIS system are on the way. "We are still determining what sort of throughput we can achieve using the new camera configuration," he told *DIR*.

The 3065 is scheduled to ship this month with the 2065 remaining available for approximately another year. The KV-2065L will continue to list for \$6,749.

For more information:

http://www.panasonic.com/business/office/cat_scanners.asp