

How to Set Up a Scanning Workflow

While most of the documents in an organization are created electronically, organizations still receive and create paper documents that need to be converted to electronic format. For the paper documents coming into the organization, a digital mailroom can be established to capture the documents as they enter the organization. Many of the principles discussed in this toolkit apply not only to a scanning operation but also to a digital mailroom.

In this toolkit, we will look at establishing a scanning operation, as well as how to prepare your documents for the scanning process. While mobile capture is now more widely used, this toolkit will focus on the use of tabletop or multifunction devices for scanning documents.

Step 1: Establish Conversion Goals and Objectives

As you begin any scanning process, it is important to establish the goals and objectives of the scanning function. You should do this in consultation with the document owner. There are a few basic conversion scenarios that you can consider:

- Day Forward – Day Forward scanning requires that you establish a date that after which all documents will be scanned. Any documents prior to that date will remain in their original paper format.
- As Needed – As Needed scanning utilizes the Day Forward method but also allows for documents prior to the established date to be scanned, as they are needed or requested by the business.
- Everything – This is probably the simplest, but also the most labor-intensive method for capturing documents. In this scenario, the entire collection of historical documents is scanned in addition to the establishment of a Day Forward process. This process uses both the Day Forward and the As Needed methods but after the established date, all previous documents are back scanned as part of a systematic and planned process.

You may also wish to establish some service level objectives to specify the acceptable length of time a document can be in the scanning area prior to being scanned and processed.

AIIM Tip

The conversion method must be chosen with the organization's and document owner's business needs in mind. Be sure that the documents can be away from the owner or organization for the appropriate amount of time needed to be scanned.

For more information:

- [5 Key Strategies for Successful Data Conversion](#)
- [What is Day Forward?](#)
- [Digitization Project: Just Scan Everything](#)

- [Accelerating the Digitization of Business Processes](#)
- [Digitization: Buzzword or Brilliant Business Strategy](#)
- [Universal Document Capture](#)
- [Digitizing R&D: P&G's Business Transformation Success Story](#)
- [Digitizing Accounts Payable – Advice for the First-Timer](#)
- [Making Information Accessible – What do United Airlines, Amazon Echo and Digitization Have in Common?](#)
- [The Business Case for Paperless Manufacturing – Using ECM to Improve Services](#)

Step 2: Determine the Flow of Documents Through the Scanning Area

The scanning area should be set up so the documents being scanned can logically and easily flow through the area. When the documents enter the area, they should be logged in, then sent to a preparation station where the documents will be prepared for scanning. Once the documents are prepared for scanning, they should move to the scanning area, then the quality control area and finally the re-assembly area (if re-assembly is necessary) before moving them out of the area. At that point, they might be held for a period of 30-90 days in an storage area to allow for rescanning before final disposition (destruction, archiving) if errors are subsequently found post process.

It is important to have a place in the process for capturing metadata. If you are scanning forms, some capture software will allow you to capture the data from the form to add it to databases. This will require well-defined forms and intelligent scanning software. If you are scanning only documents, you will need to associate either existing metadata or identify the appropriate metadata to allow the document to be easily found. You may also opt to use OCR (Optical Character Recognition) technology on the document to allow for automatic metadata declaration or full-text searching.

AIIM Tip

The flow of documents through the scanning area should be as efficient as possible for the process and as ergonomic as possible for the individuals at each station.

For more information

- [Enterprise Content Management \(ECM\) Class](#)
- [Paper at the Gates: Driving Digital Revolution with Modern Capture](#)
- [The Business Case for Paperless Manufacturing – Using ECM to Improve Services](#)
- [Capture: Process Consistency Matters](#)
- [Capture Begins with Process](#)
- [R.I.P. Production Capture](#)
- [Document Capture](#)

- [What is Document Management \(DMS\)?](#)
- [5 Reasons Improving Data Quality Should be a Key Priority](#)
- [Using Analytics – automating process and extracting knowledge](#)
- [Keep It Simple – Top 3 Ways to Get More from Your Capture Solution](#)

Step 3: Identifying a Tracking Process for Documents in the Scanning Area

In highly regulated environments, it is especially important to be able to know where in the process a document, folder or box of documents may be. In these highly regulated environments, it is recommended that you assign numbers to each box or folder to keep track of where the information is in the scanning process.

AIIM Tip

A simple spreadsheet is all that is needed to record a unique number for a box, folder or document being scanned. The operator scanning the information and the quality checker should update the spreadsheet with the status of the box, folder or document.

For more information

- [RFID Tracking for Document, File and Box Records Management](#)
- [Detailed Audit Log](#)
- [5 Hidden Security Vulnerabilities in Antiquated Capture Systems](#)
- [Web-based Document Tracking Systems](#)
- [Document Tracking System – Using RFID to Track Documents](#)
- [Document Tracking System](#)
- [Document Management Systems: A Buyer's Guide](#)

Step 4: Identify Your Document Preparation Process

Document preparation is probably the most time consuming step in any scanning process. You should know certain information about the documents you will be scanning such as:

- Where are the documents located? Any transportation concerns to address?
- How many documents are there?
- Are there duplicates? If so, how are duplicates to be handled?
- What are their physical characteristics to help determine the type of scanning equipment? (Size, condition, general quality, color, bound, double sided or single sided, etc.)
- What files will be provided first? (Proper order for scanning the documents)

Once you know about the documents, you will need to identify the process by which you will prepare them for scanning.

- Bound documents must be unbound, but save the binding materials for assembly after scanning.
- Documents may need to be unfolded and smoothed out.
- Staples, paper clips, and other fasteners must be removed. You will also need to determine whether fasteners need to be replaced after scanning.
- Torn documents need to be taped/repaired.
- Tape down any attached notes (ex: Post-It notes) unless there is information below the note. If the note covers other information, the document may need to be scanned both with and without the note.
- Illegible documents need to be identified, and may require special enhancement.
- Align all documents in the same orientation.

AIIM Tip

The latest capture technologies support the definition of templates (first, middle, and last page) for document types in order to identify each specific content without taking care of the order.

Document preparation is a time consuming step but one, which will extend the life of your scanners and ultimately make the scan process run faster and smoother. Prior to scanning any documents, it is a good idea to clean the scanner glass and rollers and to use a test target to assess the calibration of the scanner to further ensure high quality scans.

For more information

- [How to Scan Documents](#)
- [How to Prepare for a Document Scanning Project](#)
- [6 Document Prep Tips to Streamline Scanning and Document Capture](#)
- [Document Scanning – Preparing Documents](#)
- [DSSI Scanning Series – Document Preparation](#)
- [How to Prepare Paperwork for Scanning](#)
- [Revealed: The 5-Step Formula for Reducing Document Capture Costs](#)
- [Shedding Light on the Dark Data in Your Document Capture Processes](#)

Step 5: Identify the Quality Control Process After Scanning

Once the documents have been scanned, it is time to review them to ensure the quality of the scan is legible and that the documents do not need to be rescanned. Another option is to QC (Quality Control) as you scan to minimize this step.

It is important to check the metadata created for the document is correct and complete. If you use auto-classification to create image metadata, you will be validating what the auto-classification tool has assigned for the document.

If you plan to use an OCR, you will need to validate the OCR quality is within the tolerance levels that your organization has established.

AIIM Tip

It is usually best to have a person different from the person who scanned the documents to perform the quality control on the documents scanned and their metadata.

For more information

- [How to QA Documents After Scanning](#)
- [Why Quality Control is Needed When Scanning Paper Documents](#)
- [Document Scanning Quality Control](#)
- [Electronic Records Management \(ERM\) Class](#)
- [Quality Control and OCR Play Key Roles in a Document Scanning Project](#)
- [Scanning of Records](#)
- [Benchmarking Imaging: Making Every Image Count in Scanning Programs](#)
- [Information Governance \(IG\) Class](#)
- [Everything you Always Wanted to Know About Capture into Process](#)
- [Building and Using SharePoint-Friendly File Plans](#)