

CASE study

Coconino County Superior Court, Flagstaff, Arizona

“One of the unique aspects that the BMI Digital Reel solution delivered was an easy-to-use product backed by a team with experience converting records with both types of indexing requirements. They were able to offer us one simple system through Digital Reel to organize and present the information.”

Deborah Young
Clerk of the Superior Court
Coconino County, Arizona

INDUSTRY

- Courts

LOCATION

- Coconino County, Flagstaff, Arizona

CHALLENGES

- Slow, difficult court record retrieval from microfiche
- Aging reader printers and no longer able to get equipment maintenance
- Unique indexing requirements made it difficult to find the right microfilm conversion solution

BMI PRODUCTS & SERVICES

- Microfiche conversion: hundreds of thousands of microfiche and microfilm rolls representing millions of records digitally scanned by BMI Imaging
- Digital Reel application available on a shared, publicly accessible workstation
- BMI Imaging on-site staff training

BENEFITS

- Single solution for both microfilm and microfiche
- Easy-to-use solution for the public requires very little staff training
- 3 reader printers and a camera eliminated; no longer paying maintenance costs
- Immediate record retrieval from a computer workstation (versus struggling with physical film and reader printers)

OVERVIEW

The Clerk of the Superior Court's Office serves as the official record keeper and financial officer for the Superior Court of Coconino County, Arizona. The functions of the Clerk of the Court are far-reaching, satisfying more than 500 state statutes and court rules. A key function of the office is to preserve records and provide the public, court, media and legal community access to all records.

In the past, records (e.g. domestic, criminal, civil, probate, and adoption cases, plus marriage licenses) were archived on microfiche and microfilm. Information retrieval from microfiche was cumbersome and once it became expensive and difficult for Coconino County Courts to find reader printer maintenance, the Clerk's Office sought to eliminate this legacy technology.

While in pursuit of a microfilm and microfiche digital conversion solution, Coconino County received a Digital Reel product demonstration. Deborah Young, Clerk of Superior Court, states, “We had unique indexing requirements that necessitated a single solution for both case numbers and marriage license book and pages. BMI Imaging has experience digitizing court records and was able to work with us to implement a solution that properly addressed both of these indexing requirements.”

"It's much easier for citizens to locate information now and it requires very little help from our staff because Digital Reel is intuitive and easy-to-use."



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Out-of-Date Microfilm Technology and Lack of Reader Printer Maintenance Facilitates the Move to a Digital Solution

The Clerk of the Coconino County Superior Court's Office is required to archive all court records in perpetuity. The Clerk of Court's Office archives court case files and marriage licenses on microfilm rolls for disaster recovery purposes. Prior to Digital Reel, the Office made index information available to the public on microfilm rolls. Actual case files and licenses were presented to the public on microfiche. Citizens such as genealogists, law enforcement and other citizens conducting research would use reader printers to access the microfilm indexes and then the records on microfiche. Young states, "as time went on, depreciation and aging equipment led us to start looking for a digital solution. We could no longer find a reliable company to provide us reader printer maintenance due to the legacy nature of the technology."

Digital Reel Supports Unique Indexing Requirements

Most of the Arizona Clerk of Court's records were organized by case number. For example, criminal cases began with CR and adoption cases began with AD and then each were followed by the unique case numbers. Other records like marriage licenses were organized by book and page. Young states, "one of the unique aspects that the BMI Digital Reel solution delivered was an easy-to-use product backed by a team with experience converting records with both types of indexing requirements. They were able to offer us one simple system through Digital Reel to organize and present the information."

Easy-to-Find Information From a Publicly Accessible PC Workstation

After BMI completed the microfilm and microfiche scanning service at its Northern California service bureau, BMI was able to customize the Digital Reel application for the public-facing workstation. Users can now access index

information on the digital microfilm rolls and then easily click over within one application to the actual records stored on the digital microfiche images to find the required case and license records.

In the past, citizens might request a particular case and clerks would have to pull multiple microfilm rolls to locate the index information and then search through multiple microfiche records to locate the particular case. Making copies was then an additional hassle. Now, citizens can access a workstation with Digital Reel to easily find the indexes and then click on the digital microfiche records. From there users can quickly save PDF copies, email and print necessary information.

Digital Reel also includes a redaction feature. Records that need to be edited such as adoptions and social security numbers are redacted out of the system by the staff using this time saving feature of Digital Reel.

Next Steps

The Clerk of the Superior Court's Office has implemented Hyland's OnBase document management system and has been scanning documents into this system on a go-forward basis. "In the future, we are looking forward to integrating the Digital Reel platform with our OnBase system," states Young. "BMI has completed integrations like this in the past and we are looking forward to using both systems - Digital Reel for our records prior to 2009 which were on microfiche and OnBase for records from 2009 into the future".

Next steps

Tel (800) 359-3456 BMI Imaging Systems
Web www.bmiimaging.com 1115 E. Arques Ave
Email info@bmiimaging.com Sunnyvale, CA 94085