

WHITE paper

3 Topics to Consider When Researching Microfilm, Microfiche and Aperture Card Scanning Projects



ABSTRACT

You are considering the conversion of your microform archive. Your job is to make sure that every image is captured. You're only going to scan this film once and for that reason you want the highest quality. You also have a budget – particularly if you are converting infrequently accessed records.

This whitepaper discusses 3 important topics that you should consider before evaluating a microfilm-based conversion service:

- 1) **CONVERSION ACCURACY**
- 2) **IMAGE QUALITY**
- 3) **AFFORDABILITY**

Digital ReeL includes the conversion of your microfilm archive and moves the digital images to a software application specifically designed for microfilm, microfiche and aperture card digital images. Installation is simple and few IT requirements or resources are needed. Hosting is available for customers who do not want to maintain an IT environment (users access the Digital ReeL interface and their converted records over the Internet; digital

records are stored at BMI). Virtually no training is required because the interface (PC and browser-based options) mimics a reader printer. In addition, Digital ReeL can easily be integrated with existing document management systems.

Because microform conversion projects are one-time events, the most important aspects of these projects are conversion accuracy and image quality. Affordability is always a concern, particularly for infrequently accessed archives. This white paper explains the differences between Digital ReeL and standard microfilm conversion services with regards to conversion accuracy, image quality and affordability. Unlike standard microfilm conversion services, Digital ReeL will enable your organization to safely eliminate your microfilm archive and reader printers, eliminating the expenses that come with maintaining the archive (e.g. toner, floor space and maintenance).

The Digital Reel conversion service creates a precise digital replica of your film records, assuring absolute fidelity of each roll or card.



1) CONVERSION ACCURACY

Traditional Microfilm Conversion Services: Risk of Losing Information

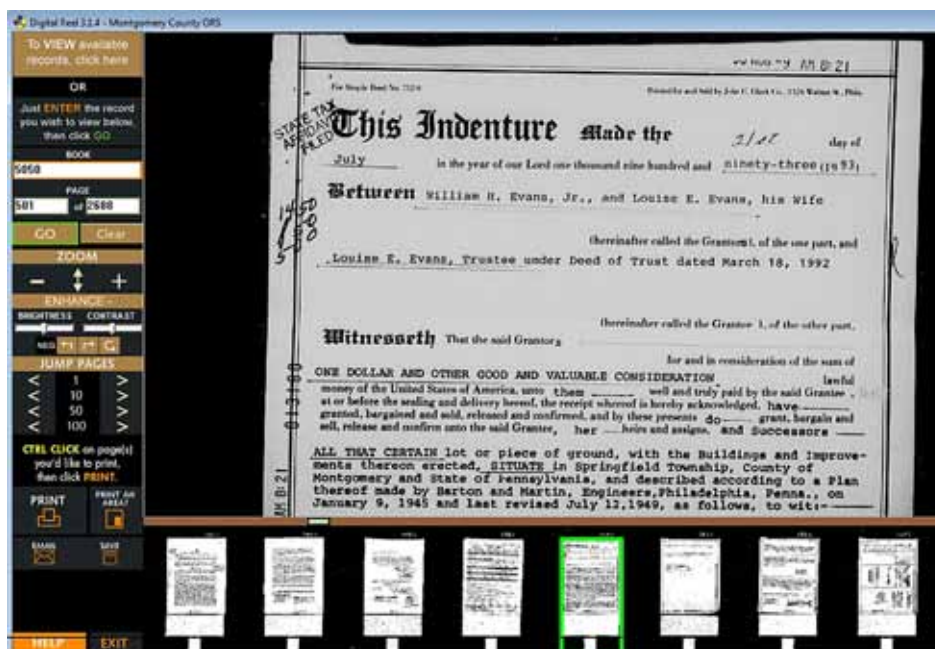
During the film-to-digital conversion process, traditional conversion services disassociate images from the microfilm roll, producing thousands of individual images. In many cases, information is stored on old film that is in a condition that negatively affects this output. Changes in film density, gaps and splices are just a few of the issues that can cause images to be missed or skipped during the conversion process. Typically, a quality assurance process will include the comparison of each captured image with the film. However, the potential for human error to miss or skip images still exists. In addition, each image is then individually indexed for later retrieval. If an image is indexed incorrectly, it is effectively lost because it cannot be retrieved.

No multi-level data entry process can assure absolute fidelity of the original microfilm sequence or document

completeness. A 2% error rate can lead to thousands of errors, resulting in hundreds, even thousands of lost documents, or worse, lost pages of documents. Maintaining the microform archive along with at least one reader printer is usually required as a fail-safe archive.

Digital Reel: Capture the Entire Microfilm Roll or Aperture Card

The Digital Reel conversion service creates a precise digital replica of your microfilm records, including all targets, flashers, splices and any other anomalies on a roll. Digital Reel captures a continuous image stream that assures absolute fidelity of the original roll or card. No images are dissociated and no keying is required after conversion to reassemble these records. As a result, no images are lost. You can be confident that the film-to-digital conversion process captures every inch and every frame so that you can eliminate your microform archive once and for all.



Digital Reel captures an exact, digital replica of a microfilm roll (or aperture card); no images are lost

Digital Reel not only creates a bitonal TIFF and PDF image of every document, but also an adjustable grayscale version.



2) IMAGE QUALITY

Traditional Microfilm Conversion Services: Risk of Illegible Digital Documents

Microfilm images are analog with a detail that equates to a 1,200 DPI JPG image. Traditional microfilm scanning methods create bitonal images (typically 200 or 300 DPI TIFFs or PDFs) that actually reduce the quality of the original microfilm images when scanning to these standard digital formats. It is not uncommon for users to come across digitally converted documents that are difficult to read, even illegible. Maintaining the microform archive along with at least one reader printer is usually recommended as a fail-safe archive.

Digital Reel: Built-in Adjustable Grayscale Enhances the Quality of Every Image

Digital Reel not only creates a bitonal TIFF and PDF image of every document, but also an adjustable grayscale version. Scanning film to grayscale and giving users the ability to adjust the image quality enables even the most difficult images to be legible. With adjustable grayscale, images that would otherwise appear as scratched or faded TIFF images can be enhanced to create an optimized version of the record.

3) AFFORDABILITY

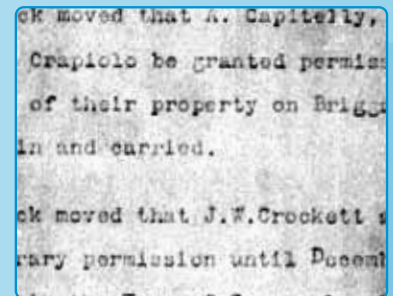
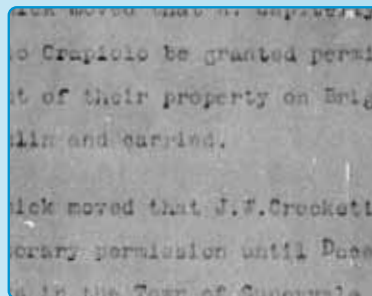
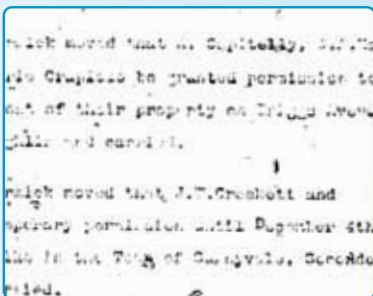
Traditional Microfilm Conversion Services: Too Costly

Your organization may currently have a content management system deployed. For example, your department may have decided to digitize all information from 1995-present (e.g. on a “day-forward” basis). Older microfilm archives may exist side-by-side current systems because most of the information contained on the legacy microfilm rolls is not required on a regular basis. Records continue to sit on microfilm even though it would greatly increase the productivity of your organization by digitizing these film archives.

You may have researched the conversion of these microfilm records in the past but found the service too expensive to justify. Standard conversion methods dissociate each image on a microfilm roll. As a result, each image must be indexed. This typically requires a lot of manual work, creating a price point that is often too high to justify – especially when considering legacy microfilm archives that are not accessed that often.

Digital Reel: Less Expensive Than Standard Microfilm Conversion Services

Digital Reel takes into account that much of the information residing on microfilm is historical and often infrequently accessed. As a result, affordability is a must to justify the conversion of these records. Digital Reel incorporates new technologies that have enabled the solution to be priced less expensively than standard conversion services.



NOT ENHANCED



ENHANCED WITH
ADJUSTABLE GRAYSCALE

As your old microfilm machines start to quit and as the film begins to deteriorate, are you going to maintain this technology or are you going to replace it all together and upgrade to a digital solution?



SUMMARY

If you have a substantial microfilm archive, you are already spending thousands of dollars alone on microfilm reader printer acquisition and ongoing annual maintenance expenses. The time lost dealing with the inefficiencies of search and retrieval adds direct expenses to your employees, citizens and customers. Ultimately, your organization is faced with a decision. As your old microfilm machines start to quit and as the film begins to deteriorate, are you going to maintain this technology or are you going to replace it all together and upgrade to a digital solution? Perhaps you have already considered this decision, but concluded that the costs of digitizing the archive were well beyond your budget.

Not anymore. Digital ReeL provides a way to convert your microfilm, microfiche and aperture cards more accurately, less expensively and at a much higher quality than standard scanning services. As a result, it is not necessary for organizations to maintain their microfilm archive and reader printer(s) as a failsafe backup. With Digital ReeL, you do the job once and you do it right.

About BMI Imaging Systems

For more than 50 years, BMI Imaging Systems has been a leader in document management solutions.

Incorporated in California in 1958, BMI began as a microfilm conversion service bureau, working with county government to film land records. Building on a track record of quality and dependability, BMI expanded its services to include preservation-related microfilming of some of California's leading newspapers, as well as providing archival filming services to archivists and historians at two large California universities. This success spawned a reputation for service, precision, reliability and innovation.

In the early 1970s the document management industry entered the digital age. Over the years, BMI has developed a thorough understanding of clients' document management needs—from microform and paper conversion to imaging and content management applications. With a Vertical market focus within Government, Insurance, Finance and Health Care, BMI has a range of tested and specific solutions.

Today, we offer industry-leading scanning and micrographics products from Canon and the ApplicationXtender content management product line from EMC. In addition, BMI has developed its own unique microform replacement software, Digital ReeL, which is available through resellers nationwide. Today, BMI staff consists of 100 employees, many who have been with BMI for decades. We convert an average of 3 million images per month and have an installed base of hundreds of content management solutions.

BMI serves commercial and government agencies throughout the United States and has developed a customer list of more than 2,000 accounts, some of which we have served for more than 20 years. This customer loyalty stems from our consistent, high-quality and customized service. BMI is headquartered in Sunnyvale, CA, with an additional production and sales facility in Sacramento.

Next steps

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