

# CASE study

## Kitsap County Clerk (Washington) Case Study

"Any vendor can provide microfilm scanning services. What separated BMI was the inclusion of Digital Reel. We can access our records online and for poor quality records, we're able to adjust the quality of the images prior to sharing them with the Court or citizens."

**Dave Peterson**  
Kitsap County Clerk  
Kitsap County Clerk's Office (Washington)

### INDUSTRY

- State & Local Government – County Clerk

### LOCATION

- Kitsap County (Washington)

### CHALLENGES

- Legacy microfilm records with poor quality images, some illegible
- Desire to scan all of the records, but lack of budget would have forced project to be done in phases or indefinitely delayed

### BMI PRODUCTS & SERVICES

- Nearly 1,000 microfilm rolls representing criminal, domestic and probate records from 1978-1992 digitally converted at BMI's California conversion facility in both the Digital Reel and TIFF formats
- Digital TIFF records indexed and formatted for import into existing document management system
- Terabytes of digital, virtual records hosted at BMI data center; virtual microfilm roll archive accessible over the Internet through the Digital Reel web client interface

### BENEFITS

- Faster record searches that no longer require physical microfilm or reader printers
- Adjustable grayscale image optimization to enhance quality of record prior to print or email

### OVERVIEW

*The Kitsap County Clerk (Washington) serves as the official record keeper for the Superior Court. The Clerk supplies in-court clerks, maintains the records and is the financial officer for the Court. The Clerk is always searching for ways to improve quality and efficiency, including records access for the Court and citizens.*

With that in mind, the Clerk sought to digitally convert just under 1,000 microfilm rolls containing criminal, domestic and probate records from 1978-1992. "We discovered Digital Reel at our annual Clerk's Conference and were impressed with the microfilm conversion accuracy and the image enhancement capabilities built within the product," states Dave Peterson, Kitsap County Clerk.

The Clerk's office has an existing document management system (Oracle) and required the digital images to be indexed and formatted properly to import into this system. "Any vendor can provide digital microfilm scanning services. What separated BMI was the inclusion of hosted access to our records online through Digital Reel. For poor quality and even illegible records, we're able to use Digital Reel to adjust the quality of these images prior to sharing them with the Court or citizens."

"Before Digital Reel, accessing our older files on microfilm was cumbersome, frustrating and time consuming for staff. The files were hard to locate on the microfilm and often difficult to read once you did find them. The staff time saved is a nice, added benefit of going with Digital Reel."



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### ***Individual TIFF Images Created For Existing Document Management System***

Kitsap shipped (via FedEx) their microfilm roll archive down to BMI's Sunnyvale, California microfilm conversion facility. "Within two weeks from when we shipped our microfilm rolls, we'd start to see the digital rolls appear on a secure web link provided by BMI. Each microfilm roll was converted in its entirety so that we could easily monitor the progress of the project as well as visually confirm that all of records were getting properly converted," states Peterson.

Key to implementation was the need to also have the individual images converted to a TIFF format, indexed and then imported into Kitsap County's existing Oracle document management system. From there, the images were accessible in the same way as other digital Clerk records.

### ***Backup Copy Hosted with BMI and Accessible through Digital Reel***

BMI also provided a fail-safe copy of the converted records hosted from its data center, accessible online through the Digital Reel Cloud Option. "Any vendor can provide microfilm scanning services. What separated BMI was the inclusion of Digital Reel. With Digital Reel we can also access our records online."

The records, once only available on physical microfilm, are now fully accessible in a digital format. Peterson states, "Before Digital Reel, accessing our older files on microfilm was cumbersome, frustrating and time consuming for staff. The files were hard to locate on the microfilm and often difficult to read once you did find them. The staff time saved is a nice, added benefit of going with Digital Reel."

### ***Image Enhancement with Digital Reel's Adjustable Grayscale Feature***

Many organizations assume microfilm records will last essentially forever, but that just isn't the case in reality. In many cases, legacy microfilm records are difficult to read and some records, when printed, are virtually illegible.

Peterson states, "Poor quality images were not uncommon with our archive and in a few rare cases, we'd have to type out the record while sitting at the microfilm reader because the microfilm was illegible when printed out. In general, it just took too much staff time to provide the records from microfilm."

A digital microfilm scanning project is the ideal time to enhance the image quality of the entire archive. By making all of the Clerk's records accessible online through Digital Reel, researchers can leverage Digital Reel's adjustable grayscale feature. It's unique to the industry, enabling researchers to fine-tune the grayscale of individual images until the image quality is optimized. Peterson states, "This was critical to us because we not only digitally converted our archive, but we enhanced the quality of the entire archive with this feature."

### ***Flexible Financing Option***

Budgets are tight and finding the capital resources for a microfilm scanning project can be difficult. Peterson states, "We knew this project would provide value to the County citizens and the Court, but we didn't have the funds to take on the entire project at once. We didn't want to stagger it over several years either because the entire point is to rid our staff of the hassles that come with physical microfilm."

BMI put a financial plan together that enabled the County to complete the entire project at once, while incrementing the payments over 5 years. Peterson continues, "BMI really worked with us. We liked the Digital Reel concept and knew this was the solution for us. The flexible financing option they presented showed us they were a partner that was willing to work with our unique situation to ensure that the project was completed without delay and that we got maximum value from the solution."

## Next steps

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