

## Article - Keying From Images When Your Documents Are Not Forms

Some imaging applications require that large amounts of data be entered from documents that are not standardized forms. Forms processing is a well established technology for imaging systems, but it assumes the documents are highly structured. What about those applications where the documents are unstructured, or freeform. Traditional forms processing technology doesn't work well, if at all. The many benefits of imaging can still be achieved, but special attention needs to be paid to data entry in these cases to keep from causing system bottlenecks.

What characteristics do these documents have?

- Unlike structured documents, or forms, the data to be keyed is not in the same place on each page of the unstructured document. Often it is not even on the same page.
- Structured documents are usually the same, or when there are multiple pages they appear in a consistent and predictable manner.
- There may be many different kinds of data to be keyed from any page. There may not be any data, or there may be lots of data, on any given page. In general, the document determines what is to be keyed.
- Unstructured documents are not amenable to the successful use of recognition engines (OCR/ICR/OMR) because the zones of interest are not definable. Recognition is seldom successful on unstructured documents because the zoning problems and laborious job setup. Recognition rates are poor when the zones are not precise.

What type of documents fall into this category?

- Land Records
- UCC-1 Documents
- General purpose image indexing
- Litigation Support
- Wholesale Lockbox
- Many Accounts Receivable Applications
- Accounts Payables
- Credit Card Vouchers

When implementing an imaging system, what data entry issues need to be considered for this type of image?

Then for each issue, what characteristics should you look for in key-from-image data entry software/hardware if you deal with this type of images?

- Often there are a variable number of pages (images) that make up a document set. (Think of the document set as a file folder containing a variable number of pages.) The data to be keyed is associated with the document set, not necessarily the individual images. Thus, there can be a many-to-many relationship between data records and images.
- Often there is a need to view the images in a document set and to advance to the next document set. This requires special functions to advance to the first page of the next document.
- Balancing financial documents is often required.
- Unstructured documents usually require 19" or larger monitors for productive keying because the full image must be displayed. Structured documents can be keyed using small monitors because only a snippet of the image needs to be displayed in order to key one or more data fields.
- Interfaces with other parts of the imaging system.

- Compatibility with any key-from-paper systems that will continue to work in parallel with the imaging system.
- Conversion and training.
- Ease of maintenance – making changes to the job setup.

In conclusion, if your organization is implementing imaging and you deal with this type of document, don't let data entry problems keep your imaging project from being successful. A little attention to the issues outlined above will ensure that you put together a complete system that fits the way your organization works.