



Document Management — The State Of The Art

Column: From the Trenches

By [Randy Johnston](#)

The 2008 session of the annual paperless conference sponsored by AIIM was held in Boston again this year. This show always serves as a major source of the latest information on the whole paperless industry. Notable improvements were noted in products that make a difference to accountants. The key thing I learned from the main stage presentations was the idea and need for simplicity in software design and use. Several publishers are actually reducing product complexity by removing features and improving the [user interface](#).

ABBYY has improved its recognition software to translate more types of documents, and its OCR recognition has been improved again. The company understands the importance of its tools to accountants and has been working on ways to make its products easier to use while making them better known. In 2008, you will see the effects of the announcements the vendor made during AIIM as well as the effects of other relationships they have formed or strengthened. You'll see this company do an admirable job of competing on a number of fronts.

Also announcing multiple improvements in its product line was Nuance. Chris Strammiello, VP of Marketing and Product Development for the document management product lines, explained how the PaperPort, PDF Converter and OmniPage products had all received notable improvements in late 2007 and early 2008. Specifically, the PaperPort capture [interface](#) to the HP LaserJet MFP printer families makes this device much easier to use, delivering images scanned back to the end-user's desktop. The images can then be saved in folders or dropped into document management systems.

Canon introduced a new 110 page-per-minute (PPM) scanner. The device has very impressive paper handling capability. Perhaps more useful to the typical workgroup or tax and accounting firm is the Fujitsu 6140 scanner. This new scanner has notably improved paper handling capability and scans at 60 PPM for \$1,995 retail. It is a very affordable and fast color scanner, as well.

If a flatbed version is needed, the 6240 is only \$2,495 retail. Notable features include:

- 60 ppm/120 ipm B/W & Grayscale 200 dpi
- 40 ppm/80 ipm Color 300 dpi
- New taper correction technology
- New separation design
- Ultrasonic double-feed detection
- Intelligent Multi-feed Function (iMFF)
- Paper protection technology
- Enhanced hard and embossed card scanning (up to 1.4 mm thick)
- Scans up to three hard cards continuously
- Long document scanning (up to 10 feet)

Equally impressive is the new Fujitsu ScanSnap S300, which shipped in late 2007. The S300 is the world's smallest color duplex ADF (Auto Document Feeder) batch scanner. It is designed to provide high performance for mobile use and weighs less than 3.1 lbs. It has a footprint half the size of a letter sheet of paper and is powered by USB connectivity or with the included AC adapter. Notable features include:

- Easy "one-touch" scanning to searchable PDF

- Double-sided color scanning without a reduction in speed.
- Holds up to 10 pages in the ADF
- Scans paper the size of a business card up to legal size
- Eight pages per minute (simplex) & 16 images per minute (duplex)
- Advanced automatic image correction features
- Automatic color detection
- Automatic blank page detection & deletion
- Automatic paper size detection
- Automatic image de-skew
- Automatic content-based rotation

Other publishers with notable focus on accounting included Laserfiche, Questys, SpringCM and SalesForce with its new content product. [Microsoft](#) had notable presence with SharePoint and add-on products for this offering, as well.

After observing the potential players for tax and accounting firm document management companies at AIIM, I see the key competitors in this category as follows:

- Acct1st EDRMS
- Doc-It DM
- CCH ProSystem fx Document
- Interwoven Worksite
- Thomson FileCabinet CS
- Thomson GoFileRoom

The products listed here (along with a few others that a tax and accounting firm might want to consider) are reviewed in the [Document Management](#) review in this issue that starts on page 8, as well as the Document Storage review that will be featured in the August 2008 issue of this magazine.

Since I was in the Boston area, I had time to have dinner with the publishers of Copanion GruntWorx. They explained the progress they were making on their recognition approach, the volume of 1040 workpapers they had been handling, the [data center](#) structure and the scalability of the product. It was interesting to note that this product is built using open source and runs on Linux servers. Copanion GruntWorx uses a different approach to recognition than the other main competitors in this category: SurePrep 1040Scan and CCH ProSystem fx Scan. Throughout the year, I will note other products using Linux to their competitive advantage, such as Oneir Point of Sale or Fishbowl Inventory.

Another key observation of the 2008 AIIM conference is that workflow has arrived. Workflow is the ability to electronically move documents through an [organization](#). The two competitors with the largest market share in the accounting space are XCM Accounting Workflow and GoFileRoom ClientFlow. The tools to dynamically define workflow are improving notably as I learned from a hands-on session with AnyDoc. Additionally, radical upgrades in XCM Workflow have moved this product along nicely in 2008. CEO Mark Albrecht plans to stay ahead of the competitors with his plans for the XCM Workflow product; and from what I have seen, this is not a marketing claim.

It was pretty clear that the document management market is maturing, and that many of the products are beginning to look similar and make similar claims for their capabilities. One thing that has definitely improved is the search capability. Another notable improvement is in usability. If you are still filing documents in file cabinets or electronic folders, you are wasting your time and firm resources. The early adopters are all enjoying the benefits of their paperless systems. Shouldn't you make your life easier, too? Be sure to read more about early adopters in Greg LaFollette's column in this issue.