"Following a review of several proposals, we determined that Digital ReeL was the best solution due to its practical, price competitive approach to digitally converting our microfilm archives. Digital ReeL's unique adjustable grayscale image enhancement feature is critical to optimizing the quality of our older, poor quality images."

Vicki deJong, Records Manager
San Bernardino Sheriff's Office

Case Study

San Bernardino County
Sheriff's Department

Overview

The San Bernardino County Sheriff records department had an average of six requests per day for deputy and incident reports that were archived on microfilm and microfiche. Time-consuming retrievals and reader maintenance costs led to the decision to publish a public RFP for the scanning and indexing of archived microfilm and microfiche sheriff records.

San Bernardino planned to digitally convert and import their records into an existing FileNet system. However, the sheer volume of images made the IT deployment and management costs too expensive. BMI Imaging Systems presented Digital ReeL as an alternative solution to their original publicly bid RFP.

Vicki deJong, Records Manager, San Bernardino Sheriff states, "Following a thorough review of several proposals, we determined that BMI's Digital ReeL was the best solution due to its practical, price competitive approach to digitally converting our microfilm archive."

INDUSTRY
- Law Enforcement

LOCATION
- San Bernardino County, California

CHALLENGES
- Slow, difficult deputy and incident report record retrieval (5-6 requests per day for records on microfilm)
- Expensive and difficult-to-find reader printer machine maintenance

BMI PRODUCTS & SERVICES
- 16,000 microfilm rolls and microfiche (50 million images) digitally converted by BMI in 6 months
- Digital ReeL software and 16 TB of digital records on rack mountable storage delivered to San Bernardino
- Digital ReeL software installed on 13 shared San Bernardino workstations

BENEFITS
- Eliminated the need to maintain physical microfilm reader printers
- Immediate record retrieval from a computer workstation
- Adjustable grayscale feature to enhance the image quality
- Option to import records from Digital ReeL into existing FileNet document management system

Accurate Record Conversion

San Bernardino had approximately 16,000 microfilm rolls and microfiche representing 50,000,000 incident, crime and arrest documents. deJong, states, "Converting all the records and then importing them into our existing FileNet system was initially thought to be the logical approach. However, we researched this option and concluded that it was going to be too expensive to convert the records, import them into FileNet and then support the required IT infrastructure."

The microfilm scanning approaches that San Bernardino researched included the conversion of each individual image from microfilm. Scanning and indexing individual images is tedious, prone to error and expensive because each image is dissociated from the microfilm roll or microfiche and individually indexed. Digital ReeL presented a practical approach that was more accurate and affordable when compared to these approaches.

Digital ReeL was different because it created a digital replica of each microfilm roll or fiche. Digital ReeL created virtual, digital microfilm rolls by digitally capturing the entire length of each microfilm roll, including all targets, flashers, splices and any other anomalies on each roll.

No images were dissociated or lost during the microfilm-to-digital process because the entire microfilm roll or microfiche was converted. deJong states, "We wanted an exact copy of what we had on microfilm and we did not want to risk losing any documents. Digital ReeL gave us a visually satisfactory assurance that no images were lost during the conversion because we were able to scroll through our virtual, digital microfilm rolls and

microfiche to confirm that the conversion took place correctly and accurately. Furthermore, the Digital ReeL solution was priced per microfilm roll and priced per microfiche, making it a far more affordable solution to us than the other options we looked at."

Easy Record Retrieval and Improved Image Quality

Digital ReeL includes its own retrieval application that is now installed on 13 workstations. Forty staff employees regularly access the workstations, retrieving, printing and emailing reports requested by detectives, deputies, and others.

The Digital ReeL interface enables users to retrieve records on a computer just as they would from any reader printer because the interface emulates retrieval from a physical microfilm reader printer.

deJong states, "Our staff uses a database that we have that logs all reel numbers. We run a central name index to find out what reel a record is on and then simply type the reel number into Digital ReeL. Our staff saves a huge amount of time because they aren't fumbling with physical microfilm or physical reader printers. Digital ReeL displays the virtual microfilm roll on the screen and our users scroll through the roll to locate a record. Users have the ability to fine-tune the quality of a difficult-to-read record with adjustable grayscale image enhancement. Users can print, email or save the requested records. If necessary, the records can be imported into our existing FileNet system."