

White Paper

Microfilm & Microfiche Digitization Projects

Three Reasons to Consider Digital Reel over Standard Conversion Services

Overview

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 limited budget. This whitepaper discusses three important topics that you should consider as you evaluate microfilm-based conversion options:

- 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. Virtually no training is required because the interface (PC and browser-based options) emulates a reader printer. In addition, Digital Reel can 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 legacy archives on microfilm.

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 contracts).

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. 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 ReelL: Capture the Entire Microfilm Roll or Microfiche Sheet

The Digital ReelL conversion service creates a precise digital replica of your microfilm records, including all targets, flashers, splices and any other anomalies on a roll.

Digital ReelL captures a continuous image stream that assures absolute fidelity of the original roll of film. 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 microfilm-to-digital conversion process captures every inch and every frame so that you can eliminate your microfilm archive once and for all.

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 ReelL: Built-In Adjustable Grayscale Enhances the Quality of Every Image

Digital ReelL 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 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.



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