BMI imaging systems

DIGITAL ReeL™
POWERED BY BMI IMAGING

"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)

Case Study

INDUSTRY
- State & Local Government – County Clerk

LOCATION
- Kitsap County (Washington)

CHALLENGES
- Legacy microfilm records with poor quality images (some not readable)
- Desire to scan all records, but lack of budget would have forced project to be done in phases over time

BMI PRODUCTS & SERVICES
- Nearly 1,000 microfilm rolls representing criminal, domestic and probate records from 1978-1992 converted at BMI's conversion facility
- Digital TIFF records indexed and formatted for import into existing document management system
- TB's of 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 almost never require the use of physical film
- No longer have to tell clients that we cannot get them the information they request due to illegibility

Overview

The Kitsap County Clerk (Washington) 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 Stellent) 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."

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 we 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 Stellent 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, "The staff complains a lot less now. In the past, no one wanted to access records that were on the microfilm."

Image Enhancement with Digital ReeL's Adjustable Grayscale

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."