

To Scan or Not to Scan?

A Guide for Conversion to Electronic Document Management

Created By: ProScan

An electronic office, and electronic content management systems, provide numerous benefits and efficiencies to their users. Along with providing enhanced productivity and efficiency, an electronic management system also allows for improved security, accessibility, collaboration, and communication. Together, these benefits assist the user in meeting regulatory compliance needs and providing superior customer service, while reducing errors and vulnerability among their processes.

Although a highly advantageous solution, the task of converting to a digital system can be daunting, especially for companies and businesses that have operated for many years and thus accumulated a high volume of paper files. For some, the task of converting their paper-based filing system to an electronic system becomes so overwhelming that they avoid the subject all-together. The unfortunate consequence of avoidance, however, is that it only exacerbates the problem. A successful business or organization will continue to generate files at a staggering rate, which only magnifies the task of conversion, and makes the idea of an electronic office that much more daunting.

For those that resolve to make the transition, there are still many decisions that will need to be made. You will first have to decide whether to tackle the project in-house, or to outsource the work to a scanning vendor. You will also need to decide what to scan, and how to organize and index the electronic files. If you have chosen to perform the work in-house, you will have the added decisions of what equipment to purchase, what software will be needed, and how you will staff the project (these are some of the areas that a qualified scanning vendor will be able to assist you with).

If you are an individual or business, contemplating whether to convert your paper-based filing system to an electronic one, the following guide has been created to assist you in your decision.

For More Information on This Guide, or Our Custom Scanning Solutions, Please Contact:

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To Scan or Not to Scan? Creating a Plan

(1) Review Your Paper-Based Filing System:

The first step you want to take when determining whether or not to convert to an electronic office, is to review your current paper-based filing system.

- **You will want to outline the following:**

- What type(s) of documents are being stored?
- How are the documents being stored/organized?
- How many years of documents are being stored?
- What is the approximate volume for each document type, and each year?

(2) Establish Goals for Your Electronic Management System:

After you have outlined your current paper-based system, you will next want to determine your reasons for scanning, and establish the goals you have for your electronic system.

- **Some common reasons and goals include:**

- **Reduce Storage** – cut back on the number of documents currently being stored in order to reduce costs, free up space, etc.
- **Enhanced Accessibility** – make the documents easier to access in order to save employee time, improve customer service, etc.
- **Improve Security** – convert to an electronic system in order to limit document access, protect personal information, etc.
- **Meet Regulatory Compliance** – convert to an electronic system in order to meet compliance regulations, maintain audit records, etc.
- **Redundancy** – digitize documents in order to safeguard files, protect against damage, produce backup copies, etc.

(3) Determine Which Documents to Scan

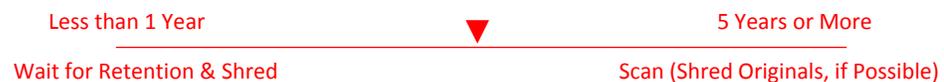
Using the outline of your paper-based filing system, and your goals for your electronic system, decide what document type(s) will need to be scanned in order to meet your goals and create a meaningful electronic system.

- **Questions to consider when deciding what to scan:**

- **How frequently are the documents accessed?**



- **How long do the documents need to be retained?**



- **How business-critical is the information contained in the documents?**



(4) Prioritize Documents and Develop a Plan

After deciding what document type(s) you'll need to scan in order to create a meaningful system, you will want to prioritize your documents. These priorities can then be used to create a conversion plan and timeline.

- **Questions to consider when determining priority:**

- Are certain document types more important than others?
- Are certain years more important than others?
- What will help me reach my electronic goal fastest?

To Scan or Not to Scan? An Example

(1) My Current Paper-Based Filing System Includes:

- **Human Resource Documents:**
 - o **Active Employees:**
 - **Retention:** 7 years after termination
 - **Volume:** 25 copy boxes
 - o **Terminated Employees:**
 - **Retention:** 7 years after termination date
 - **Volume:**
 - 2015 (Current Year): 1 Copy Box
 - 2008-2014: 2 Copy Boxes per Year

 - **TOTAL** (terminated): 15 Copy Boxes
- **Client Cases:**
 - o **Active Cases**
 - **Retention:** 7 years after closing
 - **Volume:** 2 5-drawer filing cabinets, or 10 drawers
 - o **Closed Cases**
 - **Retention:** 7 years after close date
 - **Volume:**
 - 2015 (Current Year): 10 File Drawers
 - 2008-2014: 20 File Boxes per Year

 - **TOTAL** (Closed): 150 File Boxes

(2) Goals for Electronic System:

- Reduce storage
- Enhance accessibility
- Provide redundancy and security

(3) Documents to be Scanned:

- Human resource documents
- Closed client cases

(4) Document Priorities:

- **1 (SCAN FIRST) – Closed Client Cases**
 - o **1a. Recently Closed Cases (2015/Current Year) – 10 File Drawers**
 - Start with recently closed cases (current year)
 - o **1b. Archived Closed Cases (2010-2014) – 100 File Boxes**
 - Scan previous years of closed cases by working backward (2014→2010)
 - Do not scan 2008 or 2009 cases
 - o Wait for 2008 and 2009 to reach retention and shred
- **2 (SCAN AFTER CLOSED CASES) – HR Documents**
 - o **2a. Active Employees (All) – 25 Copy Boxes**
 - Start with active employees
 - o **2b. Terminated Employees (2010-2015) – 11 Copy Boxes**
 - Scan terminated employee files, starting with recent terminations first
 - Do not scan terminated employee files from 2008 or 2009
 - o Wait for them to reach retention, then shred
- **Note:** Active client cases will not be scanned as part of the back-file scanning project.
 - o Instead, active cases will be scanned as they close, as part of our on-going scanning.