HP Legal Department

HP Scanjet scanner powers document capture for legal archive

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—Jerry Shorma, Data Management Manager, HP Intellectual Property group

Objective:
Make document scanning fast and easy despite variety in the size, shape and weight of paper originals
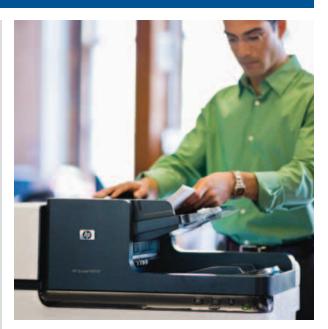
Approach:
HP's Intellectual Property group has replaced its previous scanners with the HP Scanjet N9210 Document Flatbed Scanner

IT improvements:
• Plug-and-play simplicity with USB interface
• Manageable using HP Web Jetadmin
• Built-in JPEG compression eliminates need for PC to run compression software

Business benefits:
• 200-page capacity sheet feeder boosts operator productivity
• Software automatically straightens, crops, rotates documents as needed
• Color dropout feature enhances legibility and OCR-compatibility

For years, the Intellectual Property group in the HP legal department has captured every document it uses—from simple correspondence to multi-page patent and trademark documents with complex illustrations—in a digital document archive. The latest contributor to that effort: the new HP Scanjet N9120 Document Flatbed Scanner, which is simultaneously improving image quality and productivity.

 "We started our scanning projects before HP really had a high-end scanner with the productivity features we require," explains Jerry Shorma, Data Management

Manager. "The new Scanjet fills that void. It's easy to set up, very productive with software features that eliminate a lot of manual steps and processes, and it produces high-quality images. We started using it as a test for the product developers, but it's proven so valuable we won't give it up now."

The Scanjet N9120 Document Flatbed Scanner is designed for distributed batch capture environments tied to document management solutions. It is aimed squarely at departmental document scanning needs, with a top scanning speed of 50 pages or 100 images per minute, and a 5,000-page daily duty cycle. The N9120 scanner is designed to be simple to use, while at the same time being remotely manageable by IT staff through the use of HP Web Jetadmin software.

Managing intellectual property documents
The Intellectual Property group at HP deals with some 20,000 new documents per month. Several years ago, the department had as many as seven employees devoted to "capturing" documents: they prepped the paper, ran two scanners, did quality control reviews and indexed the scans. Over time, the department has arranged to receive more and more documents electronically. A few years ago, everything from the US Patent and Trademark Office, for example, arrived in paper form; now 80 percent of those documents are electronic.

Overall, paper originals today account for about 25 percent of the total document volume. Most scanning is done by a single operator, using a single Scanjet N9120 scanner. Documents can range from postcards up to legal-sized documents, printed on various weights and color of paper. Some are horizontal, some vertical. Some are flat and loose, others are folded and stapled. With all that variety, it sometimes seems like people outside the company are plotting to make the job of scanning and archiving those documents as difficult as humanly possible.

"With the SCSI interface on our old scanners, there was so much you had to do to get it started. The Scanjet is plug-and-play. You take it out of the box, plug it in, and you're off and running."
Michael Kraft, Patent Paralegal, HP Intellectual Property group

But the benefits are worth the effort.

"Obviously there is significant space savings. We have over a million active documents," explains Michael Kraft, a Patent Paralegal. "But the most important benefit is accessibility. If you have one physical file and five different people need to access it at one time, it's a mess." Some people walk away with documents and the documents never come back. A file can get misplaced or misfiled and the documents are inaccessible forever. "With our electronic document archive, none of those problems exist."

All documents—whether they are electronically originated or scanned—are stored in the Intellectual Property document archive in Adobe PDF format. HP attorneys anywhere in the world can search for a document, pull up the scan, and act on it immediately. To speed processes, they can generate email responses and attach the original document for nearly instantaneous delivery.

Software boosts productivity
Shorma estimates that the Scanjet N9120 scanner itself is roughly 10 percent more productive than the scanners it replaced. But the biggest advantages come with the elimination of re-scans and manual processing through productivity-enhancing tools such as HP Smart Document Scan and Kofax VirtualRescan (VRS) Professional software.

While scanning, software will automatically locate the document edges regardless of the physical page size, straighten ("de-skew") and rotate the image when necessary, eliminating the need to manually crop a scan or rotate it. The software can be set to drop out a background or up to three colors in the document to enhance legibility and enable Optical Character Recognition. In document prep, an operator can insert bar-coded separators between documents, so that multi-page documents will be recognized as such, rather than having each page treated as a separate document.

Hardware features also boost productivity. "I can go from simplex to duplex scanning with a single click. That's a big help," explains Theresa Adams, who does most of the document prep and actual scanning. The

sheet feeder will take up to 200 pages, and an ultrasonic double-feed detection feature automatically detects misfeeds when the scanned documents are all on a similar weight of paper.

Operators can preview scans prior to saving them. That allows confirmation of the physical page count, and enables a QC step for complex documents. "With our previous scanners, we would have to stop the scanner, go back and manually delete a file if there was a problem," notes Kraft. "It would slow the whole process down."

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On-board JPEG compression helps the scanner maintain top scanning speed without burdening the operator's PC to do image compression. The HP Intellectual Property group typically scans documents at 300 dpi in black-and-white, yielding a JPEG image of just 20KB.

Easy set-up
Finally, Kraft notes, the Scanjet scanner's USB interface makes it much easier to setup than previous-generation

scanners. "With the SCSI interface on our old scanners, there was so much you had to do to get it started. The Scanjet is plug-and-play. You take it out of the box, plug it in, and you're off and running."

Looking ahead, Shorma says the Intellectual Property group is continuing to improve the process of capturing and using electronic documents. "One of our main focuses now is reducing the need for scanning where possible. But with the Scanjet scanner, we know we can deal with essentially any document productively, without getting bogged down in a lot of manual processes. It's reassuring to know we have that kind of flexibility and capability."

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