

Document Imaging Report

Business Trends on Converting Paper Processes to Electronic Format

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THIS JUST IN!

RICOH SPIN-OFF INTRODUCES PAPER FORMS ALTERNATIVE

In our cover story, we talk about **Ricoh's** efforts to shift from a hardware vendor to a document solutions provider. However, as we discuss, most of Ricoh America's efforts still involve MFPs in some fashion. In an effort to bring to market a solution that takes a step away from the organization's traditional hardware business, Ricoh has launched a subsidiary, **eWriter Solutions**, which recently announced an electronic tablet application designed to replace paper forms.

"It's a logical extension of what Ricoh has always done," said Ron Jarr, VP of marketing for Ricoh eWriter Solutions. "From the outside, Ricoh may look like a manufacturer of printers and copiers, but what we really do is address document workflow management for larger corporations. A couple years ago, in our Menlo Park research center, we started looking at next-generation technology related to paper. We came up with the eWriter, which features electronic tablets and back-end services and support designed to replace paper workflows."

We saw a preview of the eWriter at **Harvey Spencer Associates** annual capture conference a couple years ago. The solution consists of a tablet that has approximately the same form factor as an Amazon Kindle and weighs about a pound. There are a few buttons on the side for paging forward or backward, taking a picture and submitting a form. For more advanced data entry, users have access to a soft keyboard.

There is also a stylus for drawing or filling in hand-print forms. There is a camera for taking pictures to add to forms. The tablet features both 3G and wi-fi capabilities for connecting

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Ricoh Embracing Managed Services

Where does document capture fit in \$23-billion vendor's transition toward solutions?

ORLANDO, FL—**Ricoh's** management is certainly selling Managed Document Services (MDS). This was clear at the MFP manufacturer's recent Convergence conference for dealers held at the historic Peabody Hilton. What was not as clear is who is buying MDS, and, maybe more relevant to our readership, what exactly they are buying. In other words, how important is document capture and imaging to Ricoh's emerging MDS strategy?

"The name of our event, 'Convergence,' represents a coming together of the worlds of paper documents and digital information," said Mike Dane, VP, marketing, for Ricoh U.S. "It's our belief that this is a moment in time when a paradigm shift is occurring. We believe it's one of those moments that you might barely notice as it goes by but, afterwards, you'll look back and say, 'wow, that was really a tipping point.'"

"It's a moment that futurists and technology analysts have been discussing for decades. It's about moving at long last to a hybrid information environment that enables customers to work with print and digital documents at the same time. As this happens, we want to be the ones helping our customers make the transition, giving them options they didn't know they had. They will need our help not only managing documents and information, but also acquiring the infrastructure to support them. We are going to provide this help through our MDS offerings."

In its fiscal year ended on March 31, Ricoh reported \$23.4 billion in revenue. This represented essentially flat growth in the U.S. market, but, according to Jeff Hickling, president and CEO of Ricoh U.S., his organization saw an 8% growth in managed services. "The shift to services is a strong growth strategy for us," he told a room of analysts at Convergence. "Right now, maybe 40-some percent of our overall revenue is coming from managed services offerings but, by the

end of 2013, that figure should be higher than 60%.”

Ricoh's breadth of managed services addresses printing and documents, and also general IT. "We strongly believe that if you own the network, you own the customer," said Hickling. "We are also increasing our focus on vertical markets. Right now, we are strong in legal services, healthcare, and government, and we are looking at additional markets where we can develop repeatable solutions."

Kevin Togashi, chairman and CEO of Ricoh Americas Corp., further broke down revenue by saying that currently 64% of Ricoh's service revenue is related to hardware maintenance fees. "By 2013, we expect 46% of service revenue to be coming from MDS, professional services, and IT services," he said.

"The unit of measure has to change from boxes to images. Quantifying that may be more difficult, but that is the way it has to move."

—Jeff Hickling, president & CEO, Ricoh USA

What our market refers to as document imaging (document capture and related repository and workflow applications) fits in the first two of those three growing streams of services revenue. And, the third area, IT services, can be utilized to create the infrastructure for document imaging solutions.

"Improving document workflows through best-of-breed solutions delivered by our legacy IKON business combined with the legacy Ricoh Business Solutions (RBS) team is a strong focus and growth area for us," said Vic Readsford, VP, enterprise services, Ricoh U.S. "Historically, IKON utilized a greater portfolio of third-party products, while RBS was more Ricoh-centric. Now, we have the best of both worlds.

"Delivering more general IT services, especially for the mid-market, is designed to give our customers a single point of contact for multiple needs. We are looking to grow aggressively in this area and investing in it heavily. We are considering strategic partnerships as well as possible acquisitions."

Ricoh's MDS mix

In January, Ricoh had announced a \$300 million investment to grow its MDS infrastructure through 2013. At Convergence, Ricoh showed a slide listing 25 modules related to its MDS strategy. They include, "current state analysis," "technology solution design," "delivery, installation, and configuration," "service desk," and "remote management." "Those are some of our more popular areas that almost every customer asks us to address," said Terrie Campbell, VP, MDS Ricoh U.S. "We typically come back, and say, yes, we can do that, as well as offer them solutions in

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DIR is the leading executive report on managing documents for e-business.

Areas we cover include:

1. Document Capture
2. Image Processing
3. Forms Processing/OCR/ICR
4. Enterprise Content Management
5. Records Management
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7. Storage

DIR brings you the inside story behind the deals and decisions that affect your business.

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areas like document lifecycle management.”

Specifically, maybe only two or three of the listed modules directly involve document imaging, but even 10% of a \$300 million initiative by a \$23 billion company is significant and several modules like “change management” and “on-site services” could involve both print and capture.

Campbell added that managing electronic images is an important piece of Ricoh’s MDS strategy. “E-business is very important to us,” she said. “We work every day converting paper workflows to digital. We understand the future involves getting out of the paper world and into electronic data streams.”

Hickling echoed these sentiments. “In the end, we have to change from selling boxes to selling images,” he said. “It may not be printed images. It could be scanned images. Or it could be images printed on an HP device, but the unit of measure has to change from boxes to images. Quantifying that may be more difficult, but that is the way we have to move.”

Of course, that doesn’t mean that everyone at Ricoh is totally sold on this strategy. In fact, more than once, we heard statements like this one, uttered by Hickling during his opening comments to analysts: “While we are committed to transforming to a solutions company, we are not willing to walk away from our investment in our equipment lines. We see a solution as much as a way to pull through equipment, as a sale in and of itself.”

Larger, improved UI

And Ricoh did preview some new equipment at the event. This included a new standardized LCD interface for its MFPs, which measures 8.5-inches diagonally for higher-end models and 4.3-inches on the lower-end. “It’s very ‘Sharp’ looking but aimed more directly at business applications,” said Steve Burger, VP, product marketing for Ricoh Americas, taking an obvious poke at a Ricoh competitor that just launched its own new MFP interface [see *DIR* 5/6/11]. “Our new interface is very customizable and it’s Web services-based, which will allow for easy integration with third-party software. [Traditionally, Ricoh has primarily utilized a java-based interface for ISV integration.]

“Our new hardware is reflective of our printer and MFP guys coming together and figuring what changes needed to be made to best drive our MDS strategy.”

Cloud preview

One of the coolest new products previewed at Convergence was Ricoh’s Integrated Cloud

Environment (ICE) platform. ICE features a series of cloud-based services including OCR, scan-to-email, scan-to-DocumentMall, and scan-to-Box.net that can be accessed through an MFP touchscreen.

“Basically, a user points their MFP to a URL provided by Ricoh and they can then access the cloud services they’ve subscribed to through their touchscreen,” said Ron Albeck, manager, capture and distribution marketing, Ricoh Americas Corporation.

There is also a “Print Cloud” feature and a business card/receipt scanning option. There are three basic configurations of ICE being made available, with escalating features and monthly fees. Albeck indicated there are plans to make an SDK available that would enable third-party ISVs to integrate applications with Ricoh’s cloud. “One reason we’ve done integration with Box.net is because it already has integrations with some 60 other products,” said Albeck.

ICE isn’t due for general availability until early next year. It is somewhat complementary to the App2Me widgets Ricoh has made available recently. The widgets also offer scan-to-cloud functionality like capture to GoogleDocs and Evernote. However, they run on a PC, which is then able to leverage a Ricoh MFP for document capture.

Empowering the channel

Ricoh also previewed its ChaMPS MDS program for dealers. ChaMPS is basically an organized means of making available to dealers the 25 modules in Ricoh’s MDS offering. “Our goal is to make available to dealers everything that we invest in to target end users,” said Hickling. “ChaMPS’ modular set-up enables dealers to take advantage of everything we have but, at the same time, leave alone anything they already have in place.” [This sounds similar to the cloud-based MPS approach being taken by **Supplies Network**, see *DIR* 5/20/11].

Hickling specifically noted that providing help configuring scanning technology is part of the ChaMPS program. Later, during the general session, Ricoh showed a video of how it brought in its IKON/RBS team to help one of its dealers land a large forms processing deal with a county government.

At Convergence, Ricoh also announced that it has signed a contract with **EFI** to create some 50 different plug-ins for Ricoh’s GlobalScan document capture product.

ISVs showcase products

Finally, Ricoh put on a technology expo, primarily for ISV partners looking to reach dealers. Here we

caught up briefly with executives from **NSi**, **Cima Software**, and **DocuLex**, each of which has had significant success in recent years connecting its document imaging software to Ricoh MFPs. According to Ali Tehrani, president and COO of NSi, his company continues to be pulled into larger deals by IT departments looking to roll out cross-enterprise capture solutions utilizing their MFPs. This fulfills the vision Tehrani had early on when NSi first launched its server-based MFP capture platform.

Cima is a Pittsburgh-based ISV that targets the mid-market with its DocuClass software. Cima offers both a full-featured document management package and a lighter Express version that starts at \$2,300. Cima was born out of a former reseller of high-end document imaging and management systems and DocuClass was launched in 2007. It currently has some 500 customers, including big names like **Chevron**, **PricewaterhouseCoopers**, **Kellogg's**, and **DHL**.

At Convergence, Cima was previewing a SaaS version of DocuClass. The majority of DocuClass is sold through Ricoh channels. This includes dealers, as well as Ricoh's direct sales team. Historically, RBS represented DocuClass and, like other Ricoh ISV partners, Cima is currently negotiating a new landscape created by the combination of RBS with IKON. Nelson Cano, solutions principal at Cima, added that the company, which has its Latin American headquarters in Lima, Peru, saw 35-40% growth in that region last year, which was a strong growth region for Ricoh Americas in 2010.

DocuLex develops the Archive Studio document imaging and management suite, which it sells primarily through MFP channels, with Ricoh as its major partner. At Convergence, DocuLex was highlighting a new version of its Java-based interface that runs on Ricoh's MFPs. It offers several new features including ODBC look-ups for automating indexing of scanned documents.

"It also includes a fresh new color user interface that communicates directly with WebSearch [DocuLex's Web-based platform], whether in the cloud or on premise," said David Bailey, president of DocuLex. "We also introduced a much better way to install and update the product across many MFPs.

"The old way for a new installation or software update was to install each machine by updating the individual memory cards. The new way is to push out the installation or updates to a selection of, or all, MFPs on the network using an installation process named RXOP. This software runs on a workstation and allows the admin to update or

reconfigure all DocuLex MFP installs at one time."

For more information:

http://www.ricoh.com/mds/mds_jb.html;

http://www.ricoh-usa.com/about/rss/rss_show_news.aspx?prid=610;

http://www.ricoh-usa.com/news/news_release.aspx?prid=646&alnv=pr

http://www.ricoh-usa.com/news/news_release.aspx?prid=604&alnv=pr

<http://www.nsiastore.com/>; <http://www.docuclass.com/>

<http://www.doculex.com/>

Atalasoftware Complementary to Kofax Portfolio

Kofax's recent acquisition of .NET SDK specialist **Atalasoftware** is designed to help the Irvine, CA-based document capture specialist "expand its solution beyond the firewalls of the traditional capture space," said Bruce Orcutt, director of product marketing for Kofax. "We view Atalasoftware's technology as very complementary to our future strategy," Orcutt told *DIR*. "It will enable us to take our portfolio and better expand it into areas like MFP capture and self service portals. None of our competitors has this type of technology."

Atalasoftware, which is based in Easthampton, MA, was founded in 2002 by Bill Bither, a former aerospace engineer. In 2003, Bither began devoting himself full-time to Atalasoftware and its DotImage .NET-based SDK. Atalasoftware is best known for its innovative pricing, zero-footprint viewing, and TWAIN scanning technology. Earlier this year, the company spun off its **Vizit** document viewing technology for SharePoint as a separate company [see *DIR* 4/1/11].

In 2010, Atalasoftware's sales reportedly grew 48%—bringing its annual revenue to \$3.6 million with an EBITDA of \$1 million. Kofax paid \$4.7 million for the company's stock upon closing the deal and has agreed to pay an additional \$800,000 one year after close. There is another \$4.2 million in earnouts that can be achieved over the next two-and-a-half years.

Bither has been appointed the general manager of Kofax's Atalasoftware business unit. According to his blog, "No jobs are going away as a result of this acquisition, our office is not moving, and we get to keep our quirky company culture. We continue selling our products under the same licensing terms, and go to market strategy." According to the Kofax press release, Atalasoftware has about 20 employees.

"Atalasoftware has some interesting Web-based capture, including image viewing and annotation technology," noted Orcutt. "This can be used to image-enable Web-based applications, as well as kiosks. For example, a few years ago, when we

introduced our Scan Server distributed capture utility [see *DIR* 5/19/06], we had banking customers that were interested in leveraging it in kiosks for taking loan applications. The kiosks featured video conferencing with a loan officer, and the bank wanted the customer to be able to scan the documents needed for the loan process during their conference.

“We actually have had a lot of customers asking about scanning in kiosk type, self-service applications. If you think about scanning checks at ATM machines, it’s the same type of process. These are examples of how the capture market is changing and evolving. If you’re just considering traditional capture, you might not have that vision.

“We think DotImage can play in the mobile world as well. A lot of the tools and platforms applied in that area are not too different from browser-based technology.”

Orcutt noted that the Atalasoftware technology is complementary to multiple parts of Kofax’s current portfolio. “For example, we think it can be used to take our Kofax Front Office Server, for scanning from MFPs, a step further,” he said. “We also have a lot of imaging tools related to VRS that can be integrated with DotImage. And, with our 170 Systems technology, we offer a supplier portal for invoice processing where DotImage can be applied. The Atalasoftware technology is very important to our overall solutions and strategies.”

Allen Carney, VP of product marketing, added that Kofax has aggressive growth plans for the DotImage SDK business. “Atalasoftware has a very loyal group of ISVs and systems integrators, some of which overlap with Kofax, particularly on the high end,” he said. “We also have our own channel that is very eager to adopt a product like this. We plan to continue to invest in the DotImage SDK and grow that business significantly in the coming years.

“At the same time, we will look at our own portfolio and where it makes sense, integrate Atalasoftware’s technology.”

We know that Kofax has a growing business capturing documents to be stored in SharePoint and that Vizeit has been used by some of its integration partners in those applications. So, we asked if there is any non-compete in place with the Atalasoftware spin-off. Carney and Orcutt indicated there is not.

Good acquisition for Kofax

Overall, this seems like a solid investment for Kofax on two fronts. First, the SDK business promises to provide a steady stream of both top and bottom line

revenue, similar to what the Pixel Translations business did for Kofax CEO Reynolds Bish at his old company, Captiva. Second, Atalasoftware represents the first significant imaging technology acquisition by Kofax since it picked up LCI in 2006 [see *DIR* 3/17/06].

Part of Bish’s charter when he took over at Kofax in late 2007, was to fully integrate a number of capture-related acquisitions Kofax had made in the mid-2000s. With that integration mostly completed, it was probably a good time to add technology to Kofax’s imaging and capture platform. Atalasoftware should help Kofax maintain its leadership and tradition as not just a marketing powerhouse—but a strong developer of capture technology as well.

For more information: <http://www.atalasoftware.com/>;
<http://documentimagingreport.blogspot.com/2011/05/kofax-acquires-atalasoftware.html>;
www.kofax.com

DIR Editor Presents on MPS, IDR, & BPM

COLUMBUS, OH—*DIR* editor Ralph Gammon was a featured speaker at the recent **Cranel** North American Executive Partner Event (NAEPE). Cranel is a value-added distributor focused on the document imaging market. Gammon’s topic was “How not to Choke on your Alphabet Soup,” and he highlighted opportunities for VARs around emerging trends in IDR, BPM, and MPS (intelligent document recognition, business process management, and managed print services—if you haven’t been paying attention to our recent issues.)

NAEPE was attended by 160 people in all—a mix of resellers, Cranel ISV and hardware partners, and Cranel employees. A technology showcase was run in conjunction with the event, which featured sponsors like **Burroughs, Canon, Fujitsu, Kodak, Panasonic, EMC, Visioneer, ProStor** and **Nuance**.

Also, at the event, **Digitech** announced it had signed a distribution deal with Cranel. Digitech is a Colorado-based ISV best known for the hosted version of its software—ImageSilo. The company also markets the PaperVision on-premise document capture and image management suite. All its product lines will now be carried by Cranel.

“This is the first time we have ever worked with a distributor, but we think Cranel is a good fit because of the value-added services and support they offer,” said Sean Morris, director of sales for Digitech. “This won’t affect our current partners, and it presents us

with a whole new set of resellers to work with.”

Event notes

Chad Stigall, product marketing manager for Cranel, was another featured speaker. He addressed the topic of SharePoint and how it's affecting document imaging resellers. Stigall made an interesting comparison involving optical storage and SharePoint. Our take is that optical storage can be compared to traditional document management systems, in that they are niche, departmental buys. In contrast, magnetic storage can be compared to SharePoint, because it's more of an IT-driven enterprise deployment. We know who won the optical vs. magnetic battle...

DIR Editor Gammon's speech also focused somewhat on SharePoint and the opportunities around image-enabling it with IDR and BPM software. Gammon also discussed the evolving MFP market and how, as vendors in that area move toward managed services, they are going to be moving more heavily into document capture, workflow, and storage applications.

We received a lot of good feedback on the presentation, including some from the president of a business specializing in MFP sales, which also has a successful document imaging and management software practice. This person admitted that some unique circumstances enabled his company to pick up an experienced software salesperson, who moved over a good portion of his account base. This enabled his company to hit the ground running. But, he also told us about the start-up hurdles that many other MFP dealers have found too difficult to overcome.

“To really be successful, a dealer probably needs to invest in a full-time software salesperson, as well as a couple tech support people,” he said. “So, they might drop \$140,000 or more on salaries in their first year. The problem is that, with software sales cycles often taking more than 12 months, when they see how much they lose in that first year, they often scale back their initiative, which pretty much sinks the whole effort.”

This probably explains why it seems only a small percentage of digital copier dealers have successful document imaging practices, while larger entities like **Ricoh Business Solutions**, have had a higher degree of success. Quite simply, RBS and other large organizations can better support the infrastructure to sell document imaging solutions. This is why a lot of the capture-related MPS initiatives will probably be driven from the top down—although SaaS versions should help reduce the cost of entry for dealers and move opportunity further downstream.

For more information: <http://www.cranel.com>;
<http://www.digitechsystems.com/>

Kofax Distribution Sale Closes

Speaking of distributors, last week **Kofax** announced that the spin-off of its hardware distribution business had closed. The deal was originally announced in January [see *DIR* 1/21/11] and was supposed to close in March. It was delayed due to legal and regulatory reasons. The final terms were the same as originally announced, with the German private equity investment firm **Hannover Finanz** acquiring 80% of the shares, and the management team, led by CEO Joachim Froning, picking up the other 20%.

The spin-off has been named **Dicom**, which was the original name of the distribution focused-entity that acquired the Kofax software business in 1999. The company's name was changed to Kofax in 2008. The business that makes up the new Dicom had reported revenue of \$126.6 million for Kofax's fiscal 2010 (ended June 30) and according to Kofax CEO Reynolds Bish was on track for an EBDITA of approximately \$4 million for fiscal 2011. Dicom's headquarters will be in Rotkreuz, Switzerland, and it lists branches in 17 European cities, as well as in South Africa and the United Arab Emirates.

According to an article that appeared in *Document Imaging* magazine, the distributor has 220 employees and generates two-thirds of its revenue from scanner sales. Its service business accounts for approximately 25% of revenue—with software solutions making up about 10%.

For more information: <http://www.dicom.com>

IBM Deploying High-Volume Assisted Auto-Learning

It seems at least one vendor has already incorporated operator-assisted auto-learning in production document imaging environments. According to Scott Blau of **IBM Datacap**, his company's software has utilized auto-learning to help customers classify and extract data from 10s of thousands of different document types in a single application. Blau contacted *DIR* in response to a recent article we ran on **EMC's** new Captiva 6.5. Regarding the product's "Production Auto-Learning" capabilities we stated, "We have seen this type of auto-learning functionality offered by smaller vendors, but EMC is the first ISV we can recall advertising it for really high-end deployments."

Blau showed us a demo of IBM Datacap's Flex technology, in which manual data entry can be used to set up what Blau refers to as document "fingerprints." These fingerprints can be used to automatically process similar documents the next time the system encounters them. This is a concept similar to EMC's PAL. We had previously seen it demoed in Datacap's FastDoc Capture mid-market product. "We leveraged technology from our Taskmaster production platform to create FastDoc," noted Blau.

For the demo, a batch of unrecognized documents were imported into Flex. Because Flex had never seen them before, full-text OCR was applied to each one, and they were presented to an operator. After the operator looked at a document and selected the classification, a corresponding set of index fields was shown. The operator could then draw a box around the data that matched each index field and it would be captured. When Blau ran the batch through a second time, all the data was captured automatically.

"We developed this technology originally to eliminate set up for our APT software for capturing invoice data," said Blau. "Our competitors were walking in talking about it taking weeks to set up new templates before the customers could use their systems. With the Flex technology, you can start automating capture on day one."

"Taking it a step further, the Flex technology can be run on mixed sets of documents, made up of multiple classes, each with its own unique set of fields to capture. Once the application classifies the document, it will know which fields to look for."

According to Blau, Flex uses a "hierarchical classification" system. "Some people call this a waterfalling approach," he said. "Basically, one of the strengths of our system is that it's not a black box. A user can go in and set it up to look for bar codes first, for example, which can significantly reduce the processing time. Then, if the document has a fingerprint that matches one with zones that appear in specific places, it can go to those coordinates and OCR only the needed data. Only if these options fail, will it need to perform full-text OCR."

"The user can orchestrate the steps in their classification process on a very granular level without any programming. Typically, you go with the fastest techniques first, which reduces the average amount of time per page and optimizes CPU usage."

Blau said that IBM Datacap customers are successfully running Flex with "the high 10s of thousands" of fingerprints. "The only performance

issues we encountered involved delays associated with loading large numbers of fingerprints, and we've developed a module that now enables users to pre-load their fingerprints," he said. "There is also a utility for eliminating fingerprints if they are not utilized during a certain period of time."

Blau said, to date, Flex has been deployed in applications including tax, invoice, and shipping documents. "Since we've been acquired by IBM, we've also become more involved in mortgage processing, primarily for auto-classification. However, once customers find out what we can do with extraction, they start to become interested in incorporating data capture as well."

For more information: <http://www.datacap.com/>

New Android App for Visioneer Mobility

Visioneer has partnered with **SYNNEX Corporation** to launch a new app for its Mobility document scanner. The Mobility is a battery-powered scanner that has the ability to capture images straight to any smart phone that supports external media, such as a microSD card. To better manage images once they are captured, the SYNNEX Mobile Development team has come up with a Visioneer Mobility app for the Android.

According to a press release, "The Visioneer Mobility app also allows users to manage newly-scanned or existing PDF or JPEG files, send them via e-mail, upload them to a **Dropbox.com** folder or **Evernote** notebook, or delete them from the device using a simple, user-friendly interface."

It sounds like integration with additional applications is definitely a possibility. "With SYNNEX and Visioneer, VARs have a tremendous opportunity to be creative, build, and integrate within this new era to provide their customers new, but mainstream tangible solutions to modern mobile needs," Jim Tamo, VP of distribution sales at Visioneer.

The Visioneer Mobility app is available now in the Android Marketplace for \$99. The Mobility lists for \$199.99 and is available through SYNNEX and other distributors.

For more information:

<https://market.android.com/details?id=com.synnex.visioneer>

HSA Conference Set

Harvey's Spencer annual Capture Conference is scheduled for Sept. 7-8 at the Glen Cove Mansion on Long Island.

<http://www.harveyspencer.com/documentcapture>

RICOH EWRITER, FROM PAGE 1

with the back-end cloud-based infrastructure that supports the eWriter.

Ricoh hosts this secure cloud environment, which serves as a distribution center and clearinghouse for completed forms. This Ricoh cloud can back up forms as they are being completed on tablets and process them after they are submitted. This includes submitting data to line-of-business applications. Ricoh also offers options like forms auto-fill, field auto-verification, signature verification, and document authentication.

There is a client for creating forms—which can incorporate features like drop-down menus, text fields, check boxes, radio buttons, and signature boxes. When forms are created, they are embedded with routing information, so that when they are submitted they automatically follow the appropriate workflows. A slide shown by Jarr illustrated how, for the user, this workflow has been reduced to just two steps: design and completion of a form—down from eight steps required for a paper form.

“With the eWriter, we wanted to maintain all the qualities that continue to make paper a prevalent means of data capture,” said Jarr. “We wanted to make the forms flexible, like e-forms, but we also wanted them to be simple to use. We didn’t want to have to tell customers that all they have to do is change everything, and then our solution will work.

“That is where a lot of paper replacements fail. The people who are supposed to use them, don’t. To test the eWriter, we set up a prototype in a patient intake

center at an orthopedic setting, where the bulk of the incoming patients were elderly. Instead of a clipboard with paper forms, we gave them an eWriter and about 20 seconds of instructions. We disabled the submit button, so the receptionist handled that, but the patients were able to handle the rest of the process without any issues.”

Completed forms are saved as PDFs—by default. “But, we’re making a set of APIs available, so ISVs and integrators can basically do anything they want with the data and forms,” said Jarr. “For example, we currently aren’t using any handprint recognition, but we expect our partners to introduce that type of technology. For us, it was very important that the eWriter be able to integrate well with other systems.”

Jarr said that eWriter Solutions is currently developing a network of partners. “We have a double-digit number already and hope to grow that into triple digits,” he said. “They will all be value-added partners, because the systems require workflow analysis, configuration and support. So far, we’ve had interest from organizations in a range of markets—including healthcare, transportation, home services, manufacturing, contracting, field service, and insurance.”

When we spoke with Jarr, pricing had not been finalized, but the cost per tablet was being targeted at approximately \$500 apiece with a commitment. (Jarr said that without an external case, tablets are built to survive about four drops onto a concrete surface.) There is also a monthly cloud services fee, currently being targeted at \$20 to \$30 per month.

For more info: <http://www.ricoh.com/ewriter/>

Subscription Order Form for RMG Enterprises, Inc.

4003 Wood Street • Erie, PA 16509 • Phone (814) 218-6017 • e-mail: ralphg@documentimagingreport.com

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