



White Paper

In Pursuit of the Capture-Optimized Business

It's easy to get caught up in how things have been or how things are and forget how things could be.

The Old Way of Handling Documents

Businesses use documents - they need documents - in order to function & create value.

Documents are so fundamental to business processes, that most businesses don't think much about them. Instead, they pick a major ECM vendor, and a couple other small solutions to string together, buy some scanning devices, write document management policies, and call it done.

System administrators sometimes develop a little customization, tailoring some field data extraction for invoices, or automating the transfer of paper documents into long-term record storage. However, these basic capture processes leave a lot to be desired, and businesses then endure the ensuing mess for years to come.

Imagine if documents were able to power business systems without interruption.

The Uninterrupted Information Capture Workflow vs. the "Manual Stack"

Right now, in your business, someone somewhere is performing a manual workaround for a document capture process. It happens all the time: field extraction pulls inaccurate data, scanned images are illegible, some forms fail to get processed - all of which require manual intervention to correct.

Document capture should not require a "manual stack" like this. Capture should be simple.

This is not just a matter of wishful thinking or "nice-to-have" - this is a matter of inefficiency versus efficiency, chaos versus order.

Document Chaos Means Data Chaos

Many businesses today must front-load their document-extracted data entry with labor-intensive processes.

It goes without saying that today's bottom lines can ill afford these losses. Standard business processes have become anything but, thanks to the proliferation of phones-as-scanners, distributed capture, email attachments, download-upload duplication - the list goes on.

Businesses must move beyond databases full of basic images - that is the very essence of data chaos. Businesses need databases full of information.

Right now, all throughout your business - in mailrooms, customer onboarding, accounts payable - document chaos is wreaking havoc. Files that come into the business frequently get misread, duplicated, misrouted, dropped, and even overlooked.

Why hasn't document capture been fixed yet?

The layers of technology involved in information capture have far more manual components than they should.



Business Still Needs Help with Documents

While business processes and technology continue to evolve, the bridge between your documents and your business systems remains a headache. It's 2018 and it's still not fixed.

That bridge goes by many names - capture, scanning, content workflow, document management, information capture - but none of them have it all figured out. Most of the time, businesses focus optimization efforts on specific use cases, such as records management or forms processing or accounts payable. But no matter your capture workflow, there are gaps.

Even with this knowledge, most businesses are deep in technical debt. They're stuck with existing solutions and can't rebuild from the ground up. Well, it's possible but very expensive. You face two primary problems:

Lack of Scale: Existing solutions don't grow with you, and don't expand easily to other departments and processes.

Inefficiency: Gaps in your existing capture workflow continue to cost you dearly.

What if you could optimize your existing capture workflow?

Down with the "Manual Stack" - The Urgent Need to Tame Data Chaos in Information Capture

The thing about bridges is that you expect them to be there, continuous and uninterrupted. When chaos in the capture workflow leaves documents strewn in unsafe storage locations (whether physical or paper), or forces employees to spend egregious amounts of time on "band aid" and makeshift manual processes, the pain is not ephemeral. It is fiscal.

We spoke with a grocery retailer that loses 5 employee hours per store per week to its manual information capture stack.

We spoke with a bank that loses half a day, per week, per admin to the image onslaught and un-automated document routing.

We spoke with a large national senior housing brand, which still today houses all customer records on paper documents.

These problems are not new - they have not diminished since the dawn of scanner devices, even since the beginning of paper in the business. But the fact that we're this far into the era of Big Data, robotic process automation, as well as so many other relevant innovations, and capture chaos has yet to be truly resolved... It's time to address it head-on.

The "Manual Stack"

Gaps in the capture workflow create massive inefficiencies in business processes. Whether inside the mailroom, in invoice processing, records management, or other scenarios, the practice of shoring up gaps in the capture workflow with manual activity remains commonplace. We call this the "Manual Stack" - the interwoven layers of automated and manual capture processes.

The layers of technology involved in information capture - the capture stack - typically include far more manual intervention than they should. This "manual stack" is a sign that your existing capture solutions (both devices and software) are lacking.

Existing Capture Solutions are Inefficient

Information capture is still a problem for most businesses today, and the available capture solutions are oversized and un-optimized. Without naming any names, let's just consider the fact that very little business data is ever used, and many businesses still don't have a handle on their document-based data, especially if it's on paper.

It doesn't have to be this way. Your business can tame data chaos starting with information capture.

Smooth Information Capture Means Data Harmony

Business efficiency requires data harmony – where data from all sources (including documents) works together and moves together seamlessly. Uninterrupted processes mean unmitigated results.

Harmonizing data is a major struggle for today's enterprises. As the amount of business data continues to grow at alarming rates (doubling every two years¹), the variety and expanding of data formats is one of the biggest hurdles facing today's IT administrators. In fact, we have already reached the data chaos tipping point – the point at which unstructured data outpaced structured data in business volumes. And by 2020, it's estimated that the sum of unstructured data will be 9 times that of structured data.²

It is imperative that businesses do everything they can to leverage the power of digital transformation in their document management workflows.

You must streamline information capture in order to tame data chaos.

Health Check: 5 Questions You Need to Ask About Your Capture Workflow

The impact of inefficient document capture cannot be overstated. In order to evaluate the current state of your capture workflow, there are five questions you need to ask.

1. How Manual is Your Capture Stack?

In order to understand how “manual” your capture stack is, rank yourself on the following four categories:

Image Optimization (ensuring scanned images are high quality, text is legible and optimal for automated processing such as OCR) is...

- (Not automated)
- (Partially automated)
- (Fully automated)

Document Classification (categorizing and assigning file type, relevant categories) is...

- (Not automated)
- (Partially automated)
- (Fully automated)

Data Extraction (identifying and extracting the correct elements from the appropriate fields) is...

- (Not automated)
- (Partially automated)
- (Fully automated)

Data Validation (verifying that extracted information is accurate) is....

- (Not automated)
- (Partially automated)
- (Fully automated)

2. How many times do your documents get moved during the capture workflow?

One of the most common issues facing existing capture solutions is how many times documents need to be moved. Most capture software requires multiple jumps for a document to be scanned, analyzed and then pushed out to business applications.

- One: they are scanned, enhanced, parsed, analyzed and inserted directly into business applications
- Two: they are scanned, moved to a folder where they are cleaned up and analyzed, and moved directly into business applications
- More than two

Another aspect of this question is the number of extra copies created by your capture workflow.

Which best describes your capture workflow? How many additional copies of each scanned document (beyond the first file) does your capture workflow create, before archiving them and sending into business systems?

- No copies: documents are scanned and moved directly into business applications without creating additional copies
- One: copy is created in a scanned documents folder, then the document is uploaded into business systems
- One: copy is created in the middle of the workflow for analysis, then the document is uploaded into business systems
- Multiple copies are created

1. "The exponential growth of data" February 16, 2017 <https://insidebigdata.com/2017/02/16/the-exponential-growth-of-data/>

2. "The Digital Universe of Opportunities" 2014. IDC <https://www.emc.com/leadership/digital-universe/2014iview/executive-summary.htm>

3. How accurate is your document-based data?

Low-quality and inaccurate document-based data leads to (you guessed it) manual workarounds – exception handling and problems later in the workflow – and plenty of data chaos. How accurate is your document-based data?

- Extremely low: Requires routine manual process to correct errors and add in additional information after scanning documents.
- Low: Teams frequently resort to manual processes to correct errors and add in additional information after scanning documents.
- Medium: Teams sometimes resort to manual processes to correct errors and add in additional information after scanning documents.
- High: Teams rarely resort to manual processes to correct errors and add in additional information after scanning documents.
- Perfection.

4. Can you efficiently redeploy to another part of the business?

It is always a good idea to minimize the number of software licenses you need to make the business run. It reduces both cost and complexity.

So it's a problem that most capture software is difficult or expensive to redeploy to another department within the business. Often they require substantial amounts of administrator time to set up and customize to new workflows.

5. Are you stuck with a broken capture workflow?

In other words: How easily can you improve existing capture solutions when gaps and manual workarounds are surfaced?

This is a matter of the flexibility of your existing solution. The right solution will enable flexible development and continuous improvement to sync with your business processes.

Where Does Data Chaos Leave Us?

Obviously, we're looking for a solution to the problem of subpar information capture. Businesses are investing heavily in new technology for digital transformation, but information entry points are often overlooked.

Paper data must become digital data, but still much is left in the natural silo of the 'file cabinet.'

This is not good enough: businesses, agencies, nonprofits, insurance providers, financial firms – all deserve a flexible, powerful, meaningful onboarding process for paper-based information.

This is what Alaris is all about: we believe companies need to eliminate the manual stack and harness the power of data chaos in information capture. Digital transformation is in our DNA – we were turning images into computerized information long before the cloud was conceived in its current form. Now we're advocating for simpler, more effective information capture delivered through dynamic, ever evolving technologies.

And we won't stop until every business has it.

Alaris Creates Data Harmony from Document Chaos

Born from the legacy of image science expertise, Alaris has worked closely with countless businesses to solve painful business processes, back to front. We have seen time and again how disharmony in information capture may be subtle, but crippling.

Real data harmony in information capture brings real business value:

Service bureaus avoid painful penalties using the near-perfect performance of solutions from Alaris. Alaris solutions bureaus engage in their long-term vision while solving short-term issues, down to the finest of challenges such as jams, folds, tears, missing staples, stuck pages. All the idiosyncrasies of working with paper – that plague the efficiency of the high-speed processes native to service bureaus.

Retailers solve complex distributed capture problems using the networked capabilities Alaris offers. For businesses looking to enhance process efficiency and minimize rework, we deliver features that streamline each step of retail shipping and receiving process.

Banks seamlessly process hundreds of thousands of mortgage applications and loans using the flexible power of solutions from Alaris. Our solutions help banks automate and streamline manual and paper intensive processes to increase productivity and enable them to provide exceptional customer service.

No matter the information capture problem, Alaris brings powerful solutions to bear.

Alaris provides more than scanners – we provide solutions to the information management problems faced by every company.

Optimized Capture is a Matter of Ensuring Error-Free Processing

Solutions from Alaris come embedded with a suite of powerful features that make scanning smooth and efficient.

Alaris powers the front-end of your digital transformation.

- Eliminate the manual stack.
- Extend information capture to the edge of your business.
- Simplify and accelerate your growth.



Most of the pain of information capture comes because of a lack of intelligent scanners, leading the majority of the work of scanning (75-80%) to be done before and after the scanning itself. This prep and post-processing labor is costly.

With Alaris, prep time and costs are reduced substantially: in one customer, Accounts Payable processing costs were cut by 70%.

This is because Alaris offers what others don't:

Perfect Page: an automatic image enhancement capability that makes unreadable images readable, preparing them for OCR so you don't have to.

Embedded Image Processing: so images contained in a document are crisp and high-quality, no matter the speed, just like they should be.

Intelligent Document Protection: automatic pause of the scanning job when paper crumpling is detected, in order to protect original documents.

Intelligence at the Point of Capture: handling exceptions when they happen takes the variability out of the capture process.

Internet of Things or "IoT" is a powerful force in the world of information management. Devices all across the world are coming online in rapid numbers, and document scanners are no exception.

Highly Distributed Capture - linked by the cloud - enables extreme flexibility for a variety of challenge areas, like accounts payable, customer onboarding and forms processing.

In many ways IoT is a name for what networked devices have been doing for a while now, but there is a bit more to it than that: fully instrumented analytics across all devices, tracking each scanning event for greater security and follow-up in case of errors.

Optimizing Capture Means Optimizing Your Business

It is easy to overlook the information point-of-entry - the endpoints where documents and files are first ingested into your business. We will always be in pursuit of optimizing our solutions to meet businesses greatest challenges. As processes, technology, and financial targets evolve, Alaris and our strong network of partners will continue to work closely with each customer to architect the solutions that fit business needs.

Want to learn more?

AlarisWorld.com/solutions/document-scanners

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