

Benefits of Going Paperless in Public Safety

Why Freeing Up Storage Space Using
Document Conversion Helps Your Agency

Industry Challenges

Endless pages of paper, rolls of microfilm, and layers of microfiche cause clutter in your agency. These non-digital records archives slow down searches for important information. Public safety organizations are also required to maintain various records for legal compliance, quality control, and historical records.

Converting these hard copy files helps ensure data longevity, use space more effectively, and increase the availability of all your data.



BENEFITS OF DIGITIZING RECORDS

PRESERVE EVIDENCE AND HISTORICAL RECORDS

ENSURE THE INTEGRITY OF THE INFORMATION

FOSTER TRANSPARENCY WITH BETTER DATA ACCESSIBILITY AND AVAILABILITY



RISKS FROM KEEPING PHYSICAL FILES

TAKES UP PHYSICAL STORAGE SPACE

SLOWS DOWN SEARCHES AND SHARING

SUBJECT TO POSSIBLE QUALITY DEGRADATION OF RECORDS AND EVIDENCE

Limitations of Physical Storage

There are costs associated with storing physical documents. Agencies are also impacted in a multitude of ways. Let's review a few of the top ones.



Space

Infinitely increasing amounts of space are required to store physical documents and films. These records can crowd office areas and reduces square footage available for other needs.



Material Costs

The material cost of storing documents, such as purchasing filing cabinets, boxes, and more square footage (or renting it), can accumulate significantly over time, placing an additional burden on the organization's budget.



Maintenance

Preserving the integrity of documents, particularly microfiche and microfilm, demands meticulous attention to temperature, humidity, and light conditions.



Time

Storing documents in physical form requires significant effort to organize, file, and retrieve files, leading to decreased productivity and inefficient workflows.

Understanding the Document Conversion Process

Document conversion is the process of transforming files from one format to another, typically to ensure compatibility, accessibility, or ease of use. This can involve converting documents from physical (paper) to digital formats or changing digital files from one file type to another, such as converting a Microsoft Word document to a PDF. The purpose is to make your information more actionable and shareable across various platforms and for various applications.



Media Conversion

This process converts paper, oversized drawings, docket books, microfilm, microfiche, and aperture cards.



Data Entry Index

The converted document storage should give you the ability to search across multiple index fields, such as name or serial number, and across multiple document types, such as PDF, JPG, or TIFF.



Multiple Output Options

You should have the option to save converted documents as several different file types that will suit your agency's needs.

Common Document File Formats

In any workspace, lab, court, or public safety office, document conversion allows for greater data longevity, more efficient space utilization, and increased data availability. Document conversion services and systems should be equipped to handle a diverse range of formats. Below are some of the most common types.



Paper Records: Gone are the days of sorting through paper records to find the information you need. With document scanning and indexing services, your historical documents will be in digital form – readily searchable and available. Conversion services should be able to handle black and white, color, and grayscale documentation. Ideally, there will be optical character recognition (OCR) capabilities after scanning to make the records easier to search.



Microfilm: Endless rolls of microfilm not only create clutter in your organization but are at risk for degeneration over time. These non-digital records archives also slow down searches for important information. When you digitize microfilm, you eliminate these risks and create efficient and easy access to all information.



Microfiche: Searching for specific records on microfiche is slow and frustrating, requiring cumbersome equipment to view. This format is also susceptible to degeneration as it ages. Digitized microfiche puts information at your fingertips, regardless of your location.



Aperture cards: Aperture cards often contain oversize documents such as plats, large drawings, or blueprints. These cards can become faded, poorly maintained, or dirty over time.

Converted File Types



Once digitized, records can be converted into a multitude of file types. The most common formats are:

- XML, HTML, XHTML and SGML
- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- Computer-Aided Design
- Catalogs and e-books
- GIF, JPEG and TIFF
- Text or PDF

How Your Agency Benefits

Ensure Data
Longevity
and Integrity



Digital conversion and storage with audit trail provide peace of mind in the event of natural disaster, misfile, loss of records, or theft; plus keep historical data- safe from water, dust, and degradation

Use Existing Space
More Effectively



Storage areas currently used for physical documents can be repurposed to other, more effective uses

Save Time, Money,
and Resources



Having critical information more readily available reduces record administration time

Increase Accessibility
and Availability of Data



Comprehensive access helps you gain additional insights for informed decisions as well as saving time searching for, retrieving, and sharing relevant information within your agency, for jurisdictional collaboration, and for public access

Move From Physical Files to Actionable Insights

The days of sorting through paper records or searching microfilm and microfiche are coming to an end. With document conversion, even your historical documents can be in digital form and readily available for searching and analysis.

While many of these files can be scanned or uploaded in-house, it is best to consult with document conversion experts. They work with you from beginning to end to determine the services and processes that best fit your agency's specific requirements, including future document conversion needs. Document conversion services ensure that your information is captured in the format you need without any integrity loss.





Work with Document Conversion Experts

Some benefits of working with document conversion service professionals include:

- Consistent, high-quality conversion
- Conversion of all types of materials, such as oversized drawings, docket books, paper, microfilm, microfiche, and aperture cards
- Manual indexing with customizable data fields
- Multiple available output file types, depending on your agency's needs
- Exceptional quality control

By working with document conversion experts, you reduce the burden of having already busy staff process the materials while ensuring the quality and accuracy of the information converted.

Learn more about Versaterm's Document Conversion and Management Services >

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