



Centralized or Distributed Capture - Which Scanning Solution Is Best Suited for You?

Document capture, which encompasses scanning, image correction, indexing and barcode and text recognition, is the first step in implementing an electronic content management (ECM) program. Many organizations choose to [outsource](#) their scanning work to a third party such as D2Xchange finding value in not having to invest in capital equipment and staff. Other companies prefer to develop their own scanning capabilities creating either a **centralized** or **distributed** scanning environment.

In a **centralized** scanning environment all capture is performed by dedicated staff operating one or more scanner workstations. According to AIIM, the industry association for imaging and information management, centralized scanning is poised for considerable growth in the near future. The benefits of a centralized scanning solution include:

- **Higher quality scanners** – organizations that consolidate scanning into a dedicated department generally invest in fewer, but higher quality scanners.
- **Process control and consistency** – similar to the staff employed by a scanning bureau, dedicated scanning employees become experts at document preparation, scanner settings, [scanning/indexing software](#) and manual data entry. This can result in scanning efficiency, higher quality work and consistency in indexing files – an important component when searching for and retrieving images in the future.

The most popular type of scanning configuration is **distributed** scanning. In a [distributed environment](#), scanning occurs in multiple departments and/or office locations empowering organizations to capture documents at the point they are originally created and/or received (e.g., reception or check-in desk, customer service counter, mail room, etc.). AIIM estimates that 25% of all documents are photocopied before they are scanned. Scanning documents at the point of receipt minimizes the expense and hassle of photocopying. Other advantages include:

- **Less capital investment in hardware** – generally speaking, organizations that adopt a distributed scanning environment process lower volumes of documents at any given scanning location. Therefore, they can purchase desktop or other less expensive scanners.

- **Reduced shipping and handling costs** as fewer hardcopy documents are created, stored and physically transported between locations.
- **Faster access to information across the organization.** Imaged files can be loaded immediately into a [content management system](#) or other central repository for instant access to the information they contain.

While this article focusses on scanning environments for organizations committed to developing their own document imaging capabilities, outsourcing your scanning work to a service bureau like D2Xchange is always an option. From expertly performing scanning/indexing work for you to helping you select software and hardware for your organization, D2Xchange will work with you to implement a document scanning solution best suited for your organization. Please [contact us](#) for more information.

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