How Scanning is Evolving in 2020

From the smallest practice to the biggest hospital networks, documents are the lifeblood of every healthcare organization. Patient records, administrative files, intake forms, referrals, prescriptions, pharmacy information, and more, all lead to a mountain of disorganized paperwork. Not only does digitizing paper forms contribute to green initiatives, streamline processes, save time and improve security, it may reduce errors and enhance the overall patient experience.

The good news: Today's healthcare organizations are changing the way they handle paper documents. According to a November 2016 research report from IDC,more than 40% of healthcare organizations report that they have a paper-reduction initiative in place.

The bad news: Paper use has been significantly reduced, but is far from eliminated altogether. In a recent survey by HIMSS Analytics, commissioned by Nuance, 90% of survey respondents reported some clinicians still use paper-based documents.

The trend towards lower paper volumes means an increase in demand for document management systems that adapt to ever changing technologies. Scanners play a critical role in the effective management of any healthcare operation, and scanning technology has evolved to meet the growing demands of digital transformation. This white paper looks at how scanning companies are evolving to meet the needs of healthcare organizations in 2020.

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T e c h n o l o g y

One size does not fit all

In years past, buying a scanner involved leafing through an office products catalog or scrolling through a website and guessing which model might be the right fit. In more recent years, large corporations would push just one or two different scanners that they thought might work in most environments.

Today, guesswork and a one-size-fits-all approach simply aren't good enough. Healthcare institutions are constantly changing. Each location within a given organization presents unique workflows and challenges, with specific scanning needs that require flexible, individualized solutions.

REGISTRATION

Patient-facing needs typically include scanners for ID and insurance cards, whether at the front desk or a standalone kiosk. Registration staff also need to scan intake forms, referrals, and more. Multitasking is the name of the game at the front desk and space is often at a premium. A scanner located there should be compact in size, use only one USB port, and feature a TWAIN driver for compatibility with Citrix, VMware and your EMR system. Many healthcare institutions choose a scanner that can handle insurance and ID cards, as well as documents.

BACK OFFICE

Back-office staff typically handle higher paper volumes than patient facing locations and require a different scanning solution. Document scanners in accounting, human resources, purchasing, and other administrative areas should be fast, efficient, reliable, and low maintenance, with consumables that are easy to source and simple to replace. They should be designed to process higher volumes of single and double-sided documents and must be compatible with a variety of operating systems and software packages.

Defining trends in 2020

Portability, mobility, and flexibility are among the defining trends for healthcare technology in 2020. In many areas of their facilities, healthcare organizations are moving away from the traditional model for office equipment, which requires staff members from multiple departments to access a single scanning unit in a fixed, centralized location.

Having administrative employees wait in line to use a single scanner is not compatible with today's fast-paced healthcare environments. In patient-facing workflows, healthcare providers and support staff need to work even more quickly; the longer it takes to check a patient in or out, the less time they have to manage other responsibilities.

Not only do different locations in a healthcare facility require specific scanners, in many organizations one scanner may need the ability to move to different locations. As mobile carts are increasingly used in healthcare settings for providing patient care, so too are compact, portable scanners that can travel from room to room, department to department.

These models capture essential cards, documents, and forms presented and completed by the patient as part of treatment.

Case Study: Peninsula Regional Medical Center

Located in Salisbury, Maryland, Peninsula Regional Medical Center (PRMC) is no ordinary medical center. It is an exceptional hospital backed by a proud record of patient service and a highly experienced physician team. This level of excellence is matched by the organization's commitment to technology, not only in its treatment and operating rooms but throughout the hospital's administration and patient services.

Technology is an important part of PRMC's strategy for growth. The facility recently launched a new initiative called WOW (Workstations on Wheels) Carts - mobile carts which incorporate portable scanners and other technologies to conveniently register patients at their bedside, in the emergency room, and at other treatment areas throughout the healthcare center.

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To meet their unique scanning needs without compromising their high standards of excellence, the center chose to use scanners from Ambir Technology, a company with nearly 20 years of experience serving healthcare facilities.
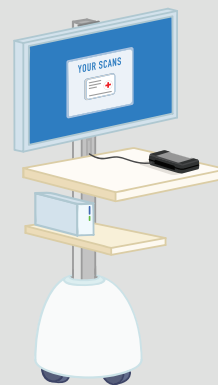
"We previously used other scanners which had driver compatibility issues, and were not durable enough for service on our WOW carts," says Sherry Ball, BS, R.T. (R), Manager of Patient Access Services at PRMC. "We saw a demo of Ambir's scanners, did our research, and deployed them. We find them to be economical, and flexible enough to adapt to different sizes of WOW carts. They provide a clean scan of ID cards, insurance cards and paper documents, and can even correct for color if needed."

Looking ahead from 2020 to beyond

The healthcare industry is changing as rapidly as the technology which drives it; business models that were successful 10 years ago won't work in 2020. Technology providers must do more than simply sell products; they need an in-depth understanding of today's healthcare environment and a personal relationship with their customers.

The push to reduce the amount of paper used in healthcare and the introduction of electronic systems has led to a shift in scanning needs. Medical facilities want solutions that are reliable, innovative, flexible, and compatible with their existing systems. Ease of use is key, with minimal training for new users and consumables that are readily sourced and easy to replace. But the technology is only part of the equation.

In 2020 organizations are focused as much on the quality of their supplier relationships as they are on the speed and functionality of their scanners. They aren't just buying a high tech product; they're buying a partner who understands the organization's unique needs, and recommends solutions that truly fit, rather than simply pushing the product of the month.

Today's healthcare industry demands suppliers who are dedicated, putting in extra hours to make sure customers have what they need. The industry relies on suppliers who stand by their products and provide personal support from knowledgeable, US-based reps, who are just a phone call away.

There's an additional factor which can't be overlooked: cost. Today, more than ever, healthcare budgets are spread extremely thin. According to a 2016 Deloitte report examining how hospitals can enhance revenue and increase efficiency, investing in the right digital technology can contribute to better cost margins.

"Many health care providers have aging back-office technology platforms that are unable to support business needs in an increasingly complex and evolving market…Digital solutions can elevate current capabilities to next-generation levels."

Yet, many vendors are still selling expensive, high-volume scanners that are better suited for yesterday's centralized environments when today's healthcare facilities are shifting away from this model to distributed and mobile scanning solutions.
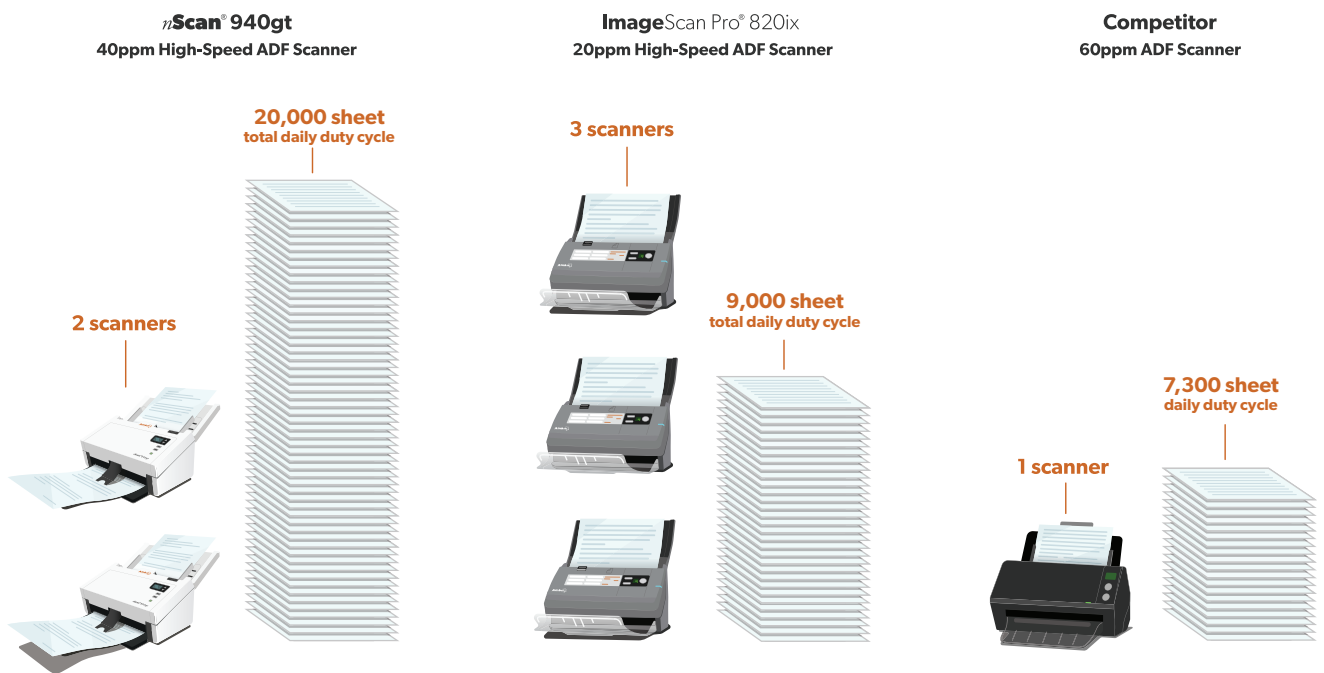
2010

2020

The Ambir solution

With nearly 20 years of experience serving healthcare facilities, Ambir Technology understands the industry's changing needs. They have developed a range of customized, cost-effective scanning solutions designed to hold up in fast paced environments, and better suited for the lower paper volumes that healthcare organizations are dealing with today. They are also set at a price point which allows healthcare organizations to purchase multiple scanners for various areas of the facility without breaking the bank.

Why does that matter? Placing multiple scanners where you need them most improves efficiency, enhances the patient experience and reduces staff burnout. Customized scanning solutions improve the efficiency and profitability of your facility's operations, while lowered costs allow management to focus on other strategic priorities.

Value for Your Money: What Does $1,000 of Scanners Look Like?

nScan® 940gt
40ppm High-Speed ADF Scanner

ImageScan Pro® 820ix
20ppm High-Speed ADF Scanner

Competitor
60ppm ADF Scanner

20,000 sheet
total daily duty cycle

2 scanners

3 scanners

9,000 sheet
total daily duty cycle

7,300 sheet
daily duty cycle

1 scanner

Why spend more time and money than you need when you could be scanning twice as many sheets for a fraction of the cost?

If you're ready to improve your scanning processes and build a relationship with a trusted partner that is invested in your success, contact Ambir Technology today.

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