



AccuRoute® Case Study: Woodcock Washburn LLP

Controlling the Flow of Paper Documents in the Legal Office May Be Easier Than You Think

For law firms, a document is more than a contract or a letter. It is also a storage mechanism and the asset that it stores is knowledge. Effectively controlling the contents of documents, or knowledge assets, is obviously critical to the success of any firm. This is a compelling reason why the concept of document management systems was and remains so appealing, and why the largest suppliers of those systems began first serving the legal market.



As in life, the business of documents is not neat and orderly – in fact, it can be extremely challenging logistically, especially paper documents. And unfortunately, many of the documents circulating in and out of law firms are not electronic, but paper-based (hardcopy).

The issue: Adding a paper document into an electronic archive such as a document management system is not impossible, but it can be laborious to the point of impracticality since it requires additional hardware, training and time. Even when the firm invests in all three, the results are not always optimal.

The law firm of Woodcock Washburn found itself at this point a little over a year ago. While recognizing the benefits of electronic document storage and exchange, they still found themselves continually awash in paper documents. Efforts to scan and archive hardcopy to their document management system generated marginal results – scan quality was not good enough to insure proper conversion to an editable format through the use of OCR (optical character recognition) software. In the end, the entire process was too involved and too time consuming to be of much use to the firm's paralegals and administrators charged with managing daily information flow.

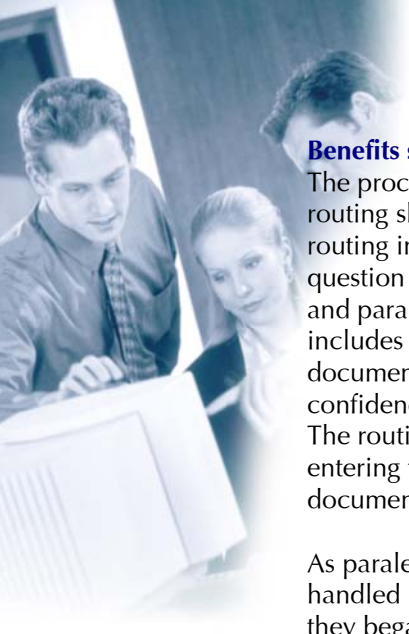
The firm took stock of the situation and decided that in order to be successful in their quest, there were some basic requirements that had to be met before they would seriously consider investing in a "solution" for this problem.

A workable solution had to contain the following points.

1. Ease of use – no matter what the features, or how many bells and whistles, first and foremost the process had to be easy – easy to understand, easy to train and easy to use daily, even hourly as an integral part of the daily information flow at the firm.
2. The document files that are entered into their document management system had to be text searchable. The information must be available for re-use if necessary, so high quality scanning and reliable OCR were critical to the equation.
3. The system had to be easily scalable to meet increased use and demand.

A solution that would meet all three requirements was readily available.

Woodcock Washburn chose a combination hardware/software system to address the issue of streamlining, managing and archiving paper documents. Xerox supplied the hardware piece – a scan enabled, networked WorkCentre Pro, and Omtool, Ltd delivered the software – AccuRoute, a document capture and routing application. This solution immediately addressed the three fundamental requirements; extreme ease of use, conversion of scanned documents to an editable format (searchable PDF), and the modular nature of the system ensured that it could keep pace, cost-effectively, with growing needs.



Benefits soon became readily apparent.

The process of defining the document route is done pre-scan at the users desktop, and encoded on a routing sheet (the AccuRoute intelligent routing sheet) that is scanned with the document, making the routing information extremely portable – once a routing sheet is attached to a document, there is no question as to where it is going, the information is right there. As an added benefit, the administrators and paralegals at Woodcock Washburn found that they could put together a distribution list, that includes the resident document management system, print the routing sheet, combine it with the document and hand the package off to an assistant or mailroom attendant to execute the scan - with total confidence that the document will be delivered precisely to the destinations required, with no errors. The routing sheet eliminates the possibility of routing the document to the wrong recipients as a result of entering the wrong e-mail address or fax number at the device. An AccuRoute user has full control of document delivery at all times – a benefit of the intelligent routing sheet.

As paralegals and administrative assistants became more familiar with the product -- the training was handled literally in minutes. Realizing how easy it was to use and the flexibility of the delivery options, they began to use it for more general delivery tasks in addition to its primary task – populating the DMS with hardcopy documents.

The paralegals and administrators couldn't be happier with the system that the firm has implemented. A task that before took too much time and effort has been reduced to a few mouse clicks and a simple scan... at the hallway copier no less. The solution has proved so successful that the firm plans to implement more scan stations – they currently have 6, and will use AccuRoute generated routing sheets to move the hundreds of thousands of patent documents out of the file cabinets and into electronic storage.

Summary

Converting paper documents into an accessible, text searchable format and efficiently archiving them to a document management system can be easily incorporated by law firms, using a combination of AccuRoute and a scan-enabled digital copier such as Xerox's WorkCentre Pro. The system is scalable, easy to learn and fits comfortably within a firm's daily legal document workflow.

About Omtool, Ltd.

Omtool provides enterprise document messaging applications that streamline workflows, reduce costs and ensure secure, confidential e-document exchange. Omtool accomplishes this by integrating with industry-leading e-mail messaging, enterprise resource and document management systems to add secure delivery and high volume fax functionality to a company's existing communication infrastructure. Because paper remains an integral part of many business processes, Omtool also provides technology that incorporates electronic delivery, security and billing functionality into industry-leading multifunction and scanning devices. Based in Andover, M.A., and with an office in the United Kingdom, the company can be contacted at 800-886-7845 or www.omtool.com.

About Woodcock Washburn LLP

Over sixty years of intellectual property practice at Woodcock Washburn has built a firm with a wealth of experience in patent and trademark law, copyright and trade secret protection, and the safeguarding of products and services from unfair competition.

Schooled and trained in such demanding disciplines as biotechnology, chemistry, and computer sciences, and chemical, electrical, and mechanical engineering, Woodcock Washburn's lawyers and scientific advisors work on the leading edge of their specialties.

With over eighty attorneys, Woodcock Washburn distinguishes itself as the largest intellectual property firm in the tri-state area of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. It is also one of the larger firms of its kind in the country, serving clients on a national and international basis. In 2000, the firm opened an office in Seattle, Washington, to more conveniently serve its numerous West Coast clients.

Woodcock Washburn was recently honored by its clients, when they placed the firm among the top twenty-four firms in total listings, in a survey of Fortune 250 companies asked to list outside law firms used by their company for intellectual property counseling and/or litigation. See IP Worldwide, an American Lawyer Affiliate, October/November 2000 issue.

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