



American Jewish Historical Society makes documents more accessible

SITUATION

The Boston Branch of the American Jewish Historical Society was running out of space to collect and store documents. They also wanted to make it quicker and easier for the public to access information.

OBJECTIVE

Digitize historical documents to save space while retaining quick access to information; eliminate the wait and cost involved with retrieving documents; limit handling of documents to ensure preservation of originals.

SOLUTION

Two **Kodak i1320** Scanners with tethered A3 and A4 flatbeds, **Kofax** Capture Software, **Kofax** Virtual Rescan Software, **Solu-Soft Technologies'** N2 Document Management System.

COMMENTS

"With our **Kodak i1320** Scanners, we're making our documents more accessible. It's now simpler, quicker, and easier for researchers to access information."

~ Judi Garner,
Archivist of the
New England Collections,
Boston Branch of the American
Jewish Historical Society

When researchers called Judi Garner, Archivist of the New England Collections, Boston Branch of the American Jewish Historical Society, asking if she had information about a prominent Jewish figure, family, or temple, she would tell them, "You'll have to come look through our finding aids to locate relevant collections. We'll pull the specific boxes you need and help you search through the folders to locate the documents you're interested in. You should allow yourself plenty of time for research."

Not exactly what a writer-under-deadline wants to hear.

"Now, with our **Kodak i1320** Scanners, we're making our documents more accessible. It's simpler, quicker and easier for researchers to access information," states Garner.

The Boston Branch of the American Jewish Historical Society is an archive and research library that collects, preserves and makes available to the public, primary sources documenting the history of the Greater Boston Jewish Community.

"Our space is finite," notes Garner. "We're almost at the limit of our storage space on site. Shortly we'll have to begin storing collections off-site. When researchers need to view the papers, it will take time and money to retrieve documents from off-site storage."

Hence, the push to implement a scanner solution.

Kodak i1320 Scanners solve space, retrieval, and preservation issues

Justin Wyner, past President and Chair of the Boston Board of Overseers of the Historical Society, helped build the case and raise the funds for the digital equipment through the Trustees Under the Will of Herman Dana to purchase the equipment and software to enable the Society to digitize the archives. He felt it was critical for the Jewish community to preserve its history in digital format.

"Digitizing was the most logical solution. It was less costly and more searchable than microfilm while giving us the ability to integrate our older paper-based collections with the electronic documents that will become more the norm in the future," says Wyner.

Wyner and Garner worked with Inception Technologies, based in Manchester, NH, to design a scanner solution for the Historical Society.

"Based on its high throughput speed, small footprint, and tethered flatbed accessories, the **Kodak i1320** Scanner was the best fit for the American Jewish Historical Society," recalls Jeff Kattar of Inception Technologies.

8½" x 11" and legal-size documents in good condition are fed through the upright **Kodak i1320** Scanner. Fragile materials are scanned individually on a flatbed accessory: the A4 flatbed or the A3 flatbed for oversized documents like blueprints, maps, and posters.

The beauty of the tethered flatbeds is that because of the small footprint of the **Kodak i1320 Scanner**, Garner can keep the flatbeds out in work stations where they are easily accessible at all times. This greatly enhances the value of the system.

"This scanner solution from Kodak solves three problems for the Historical Society: space issues, search and retrieval issues, and preservation issues," notes Kattar.

Space no longer an issue

The Historical Society is now back-scanning its entire archives. They use **Kofax Capture Software** to capture the images and **Kofax Virtual Rescan Software** and Kodak's Perfect Page technology to optimize the images for readability. The digitized images are then released into **Solu-Soft Technologies' N2 Document Management Software**.

Once the originals are scanned, the collections that are stored on site can move off-site, which will free space so the Society may continue to collect new materials. The documents can stay off-site too, because researchers can now access them from a computer using a searchable database.

Searches are a snap

Previously, researchers had to look through "finding aids" to track down



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information that might or might not reside within a collection. The "finding aids" were like maps to the collection listing its scope and contents. Then an archivist had to dig through the collection to find and pull the box and folder with the desired documents. Very time intensive.

Now, the digital collections are readily searchable. Much like a browser search, researchers and archivists do a "Full Text" search on a computer with digital access to the Historical Society's collections. Any documents that match the text search will appear on a "Results" page similar to an Internet Search Engine. But unlike typical browser searches, and a unique development with this system, the viewer sees extensive blurbs about the documents, which helps the viewer decide whether he or she is interested in the document. If interested, he or she can click to view the entire document along with its location — down to the collection, box and folder — in case the researcher needs to see the original.

"Our new digital equipment enables us to access information on a given topic that might be housed in different collections across our archival holdings. Searchability across multiple collections by entering a key word is revolutionary in the archival world," notes Wyner.

In addition to making it easier for researchers to find information and cite sources, it's now faster for archivists to respond to e-mail and phone reference questions. With a quick computer search, archivists now give researchers answers in five minutes or less about whether they have documents pertaining to a subject and provide copies of the files immediately.

Garner adds, "With off-site storage, it could take me days, even longer, to access information!"

Fragile documents are protected and preserved

Once each collection is scanned using the **Kodak i1320 Scanners**, the original documents can be stored off-site in acid-free folders and boxes in a climate-controlled storage area. When researchers need to access a document, they search for the information digitally, while the originals stay safe in storage.

"Handling the originals puts wear and tear on collections and over time causes documents to deteriorate," says Garner. "Limiting exposure helps ensure greater longevity of the originals. So by using the **Kodak i1320 Scanners**, we're being proactive in preserving our valuable collections."

User-friendly yet sophisticated features

Molle Whiteside, one of the Schilder Family Interns at the Society and recent graduate of Simmons College Library School, says she likes being able to improve images using Perfect Page technology (built into **Kodak Scanners**) and **Kofax Virtual Rescan Software**. She also enjoys creating JPEG images of pictures and having the ability to specify how many pages are in each document. Best of all, "I really get to know the collections as I go through and scan the documents. I get as much a sense of history as a researcher."

Garner adds, "The **Kodak i1320 Scanner** is very user-friendly. At first I was apprehensive because I'm not tech savvy. But the equipment and programs are easy to master — from indexing data and scanning documents to researching subject matter — it all works well."

To learn more about **Kodak Document Imaging Products and Services**, contact your Authorized Reseller of **Kodak Products**, call 1.800.944.6171, or log on to www.kodak.com/go/docimaging.