

Digital Mailroom, Is it for YOU?

Digital Mailroom is the process of employing technology to convert incoming mixed mail, opened or unopened, into an electronic format. The incoming mixed mail can and might include letters, flats, or parcels. Both paper and electronic mail can be managed through the same process allowing companies to standardize their internal mail distribution procedures and adhere to company compliance policies.

The capturing of mail in electronic format and distributing to departments and/or individual staff has a variety of benefits, some of which are:

- Reducing (shortening) the decision cycle
- Improved workflow, process efficiency and control
- Reduced operating costs, paper costs
- Ensuring data tracking
- Timely and convenient for departments and staff
- Reclaimed facility space
- Improved process quality
- Increased security

Organizations may favor an onsite digital mailroom because it offers visibility, access and control that fit well with business models and corporate culture. For example, the healthcare industry. With healthcare reform, there are increased numbers of insured individuals now in the U.S. and with that comes an increase in paperwork and administrative duties on both the healthcare providers and those paying the bills.

By digitizing the incoming mail process, and indexing the documents on the fly, companies can not only gain control of their mail processes internally (no more efficiency losses, gaps in document control and loss of valuable mail), but will have the opportunity to combine electronic mail formats (e-mail, fax) in the same document processing flow. A digital mailroom designed as a central platform for information allows an organization to bring rationality to mail processing and significant gains in productivity and customer service.

Converting incoming mail into digital images and their distribution involves the utilization of hardware and software offering numerous features and functionality.

Hardware

- Scanner to process documents for imaging
- Extractor to open envelopes and extract contents
- Sorting bins to organize documents systematically after scanning
- Waste capture receptacles

Software

- Provides capability to sort mail by category manually or automatically
- OCR (Optical Character Recognition) available to identify a variety of specific documents
- Automated distribution of captured images

- Options for digital format to fit existing system
- Bar code reading capabilities

The range of hardware available to turn paper documents into digital images has increased considerably in the last 10 years. Although desktop scanners and multi-function devices (MFDs) are now very affordable and well suited to small office or departmental scanning requirements, the need for high speed, high volume document scanners is still evident. The speed, reliability and increased functionality of these high-end scanners can save considerable time and money in the long term.

Today, it is possible to scan documents of different dimensions and formats in the same flow, scan color documents, sort them physically and read data from them using OCR and barcode technologies during the scanning process. Processing speed has also significantly increased. This evolution, together with the existence of machines able to completely automate mail processing – opening envelopes, removing staples, scanning, sorting – play a significant role in the development of large volume paper processing such as mail processing.

The next step for companies is to rationalize their mail processing to be as consistent as possible with their organizational structure, e.g. choosing between the implementation of a centralized digital mailroom and the implementation of decentralized mail scanning facilities or a combination of the two. To find out more about the digital mail process and resources, please contact us at 513-429-9526 or e-mail us at info@omgservices.com.