Scanning records – where do I start?
Part 2 – Identifying your requirements
Scanning Requirements

Background information:

You have purged your inactive records according to the retention schedule (see Getting Started: Managing Records).
  You have filing cabinets with records in them that:
  A. Everyone accesses all of the time;
  B. Are NOT part of an ongoing litigation, audit or investigation; and
  C. Take up a significant amount of space
 This is an attempt to address the beginning steps of any scanning/imaging project.

STEP	ACTION	COMMENT
1	IDENTIFY your requirements up front	
	A. Identify your scanning requirements.	You must consider how you want your records scanned before you begin your scanning project.
	1. Determine how your users use the records and what will enhance access.	
	(a) You want each page to be scanned separately.	Do you constantly look for very specific information that may be hard to find in multiple paged documents?
	(b) You want multiple paged documents to be scanned together.	Do you constantly need information that may be easier to find in multiple paged documents so you won't have to continually open up various documents? • Bandwidth and the volume of records can slow down access to multiple paged documents. • Identifying the growth rate of your system up front can help with this planning.
	2. The font used on the papers is small.	Scanning at least at 300 dots per inch (dpi) will increase the readability of the records. The higher the dpi, the more space required for your images and your system. The lower your dpi the less space required the lower quality of the image, the less likely to be sustainable over time and multiple migrations.

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3.	You want to use optical character recognition (OCR) or intelligent character recognition (ICR) to reduce indexing activities and enhance searching capabilities.	Scanning at least at 300 dots per inch (dpi) will increase the ability to OCR or ICR the records. Neither is 100% accurate, so more upfront quality control checking (qc) will be required to enhance your results.
4.	Your documents are in fragile condition.	Records in fragile condition should be scanned on flat bed scanners. They may rip or jam in high volume sheet fed scanners where the documents travel through the scanner.
5.	Some of your documents are in color and the color is an important component that adds context to the content of the record.	When color is required to interpret the content of the record, the documents should be scanned in color.
6.	Your documents have varying levels of contrast and are difficult to read.	Scanning in grayscale versus bi-tonal (black and white) may allow for better legibility. Sometimes, image enhancing must be done to provide the best results. Use of image "clean-up" and other post-scanning processing should only be used to improve legibility.
7.	Image format should be decided up front based on retention and regulatory or archival requirements.	Using a standardized format with non-proprietary file wrappers is considered to be best practice. PDF is a proprietary file format but is used by many. The more images you have, the easier it is to migrate if they are all the same format.
8.	Image compression can help with reducing sizes of your images, but can impact legibility and migration success.	The compression should be standard without any proprietary changes to algorithms.
9.	The records were created electronically.	You may be able to capture the records electronically rather than creating a paper copy and scanning it.