

Case study

Central Library, Hiroshima University

»Being a contactless scanner that scans from above, the SV600 can also scan small solid objects and incorporate the images into PDF files along with text and other material. This is something that wasn't possible on conventional scanners.«

Masato Nomura, Leader of the Library Information Distribution Group, Central Library of Hiroshima University



The customer

As the central library of Hiroshima University, located on its Higashi-Hiroshima campus, with a full range of faculties, it supports academics and students with an archive of more than 2.2 million documents. It is also known for holding the nation's largest collection of textbooks, including texts used at private elementary schools during the Edo period. The library is actively involved in digitization, publishing a database of images from its collection on the web and offering a full range of electronic journals, amongst other efforts.

Problems associated with sending copied material to other libraries

We spoke to Masato Nomura, leader of the Library Information Distribution Group and Yuki Takiwaki, who is in charge of document delivery for the group. Of the two main tasks of the library, namely processing incoming documents and making documents available to users, the group is responsible for the latter.

"We use the ScanSnap SV600 for the interlibrary loan service (ILL), which involves making copies of material at libraries of Hiroshima University and sending it to other libraries," explained Ms. Takiwaki. The interlibrary loan service provides a mechanism whereby libraries can make their books, articles, and other documents available to other libraries in order to provide study material to university students or other academics. The problem with this is that many documents in magazine format, such as academic journals of which there is a high demand for ILL copies, are difficult to copy on a flatbed copier due to factors such as the glue on their spines drying out. "As opening up a badly damaged document and pressing down on it will split the spine, we have to take great care opening them when copying, or simply give up and photograph them using a digital camera instead," said Ms. Takiwaki.

Digitization to protect documents that can no longer be safely opened

The installation of an SV600 has solved this problem. Rather than use a copier, the library can now print documents scanned on the SV600. "Because the SV600 is contactless and scans from above, it can copy damaged documents without subjecting them to excessive stress. Thanks to the image correction functions, even documents that can no longer safely be fully opened can be saved as easily-viewable images," said Ms. Takiwaki.

The customer

Customer: Central Library, Hiroshima University
Country: Japan
Industry: Education

The challenge

One of the jobs of a library is to provide document images to other libraries in what is known as the interlibrary loan service. The Central Library at Hiroshima University had problems copying badly damaged magazine-format documents, which are in high demand. They had even resorted to using a digital camera.

The solution

The installation of an SV600 contactless scanner has simplified the job of copying damaged or large-format material. It also enables images to be enhanced through use of such helpful features as Book Image Correction and Point Retouch.

The benefits

- Ability to copy valuable manuscripts without damaging them
- Minimized work associated with turning over and holding down pages when scanning
- Minimized errors by enabling pages to be viewed as they are copied

"Eliminating the need for repeatedly placing books face down and turning them over is also helpful when copying heavy books such as volumes of academic journals," added Mr. Nomura. "Being able to see the page you are copying is also a big help, because it is easy to make a mistake when the book is face down."

The ILL service also permits the exchange of copied digital data if the copyright of the book or journal has expired. Sending scanned data provides another productivity improvement.

"The exchange of digital data with overseas libraries is increasing," explained Ms. Takiwaki. "This is done with the understanding that the data will be erased after it has been printed on paper and handed over to the recipient."

Fast scanning together with image correction

"The SV600 has a fast scanning speed. Apart from those documents that require manual image correction each time, the speed is about the same as a conventional copier," said Ms. Takiwaki.

Mr. Nomura recalled that an overhead copier had been tried in the past, but that it was slow and had never been put to practical use.

"It's great to have the Page Turning Detection function, which detects when a page is turned. Whereas the book needs to be turned over each time when using face-down copying, we only need to turn the pages four times to make a copy of five double-page spreads with the SV600."

The SV600 is also equipped with image correction functions. These are the Book Image Correction function, which adjusts for the distortion created by the gutter of a book when open face-up, and the Point Retouch function, which can erase fingers or other extraneous elements from the image.

Ms. Takiwaki went on to say, "The Book Image Correction function does a good job of removing distortion. While some degree of distortion sometimes remains in the corrected image if the book was not opened sufficiently to allow the edges to be scanned, or photographs may be distorted depending on where they are on the page, but for the most part there are no problems. And we can now erase fingers that have been scanned by mistake when pressing down the documents."

Products and services

- ScanSnap SV600

Open access is a possibility for the future

The copying discussed earlier for the interlibrary loan service is handled by library staff in the back office. In contrast, the provision of material to academics, students, and other members of the public is usually achieved by having users copy pages for themselves on a copier installed in a public place. If an SV600 were used in place of a copier for this purpose, the potential benefits include more reliable copying and less damage to books. Unfortunately, copyright restrictions currently apply, and setting up such an arrangement would be no easy matter.

As Mr. Nomura noted, "Libraries permit users to make copies freely, without copyright restrictions, on the condition that they intend to use the copies for academic research, that copies are only extracts of the work, and that each individual takes only one copy. However, this only applies to paper copies."

"Because the provision of digital data to an individual equates to public distribution of the copied material, it is currently prohibited. And, installing an open-access SV600 would inevitably create a potential for people to take scanned data away with them, so at this point in time, we restrict its use to the back office," added Ms. Takiwaki.

However, Mr. Nomura also recognized the possibilities if a way could be found to prevent people from taking the data with them, such as by printing out SV600 scan data directly.

"It would be helpful if, in the future, we could place the scanner in our section for magazines, of which copies are in high demand."

Possibilities beckon for academics also

Speaking about the potential of the SV600, Mr. Nomura made the following comment.

"Being a contactless scanner that scans from above, the SV600 can also scan small solid objects such as pottery fragments, and incorporate the images into PDF files along with text and other material. This is something that wasn't possible on conventional scanners. For this reason, I am anticipating demand from academics. I also expect it would prove useful in other parts of the university, such as the copy center."

More routine use of the scanner in the back office is likely in the future. Along with the interlibrary loan service, Ms. Takiwaki is also keen to see the SV600 put to use in all sorts of other daily tasks. We can look forward to seeing the SV600 help improve the productivity of academic research.

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