

# Case study

## Ontario Genealogical Society

»The Fujitsu ScanSnap SV600 scanners are central to digitizing archival paper file documents and helping preserve Lambton County's family histories for future generations.«

Jane Teskey, Digital Public Chair, Stray Chair, The Lambton Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society



### The customer

The Ontario Genealogical Society, founded in 1961, is a not-for-profit and the largest genealogical society in Canada, with 34 Branches and Special Interest Groups. The Lambton Branch of the Society works closely with Lambton County Archives, an archival centre supporting genealogy and local history researchers.

The Archives protects fragile materials in an environmentally controlled physical storage vault, containing family files, letters, newspapers, photo collections, maps, and land records, to name but a few.

### The challenge

"We needed a scanner for scanning overtop, especially for hard cover books that you can't take the backing off without destroying the book," says Jane Teskey, Digital Public Chair, Stray Chair, at the Lambton Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society. "Many of our books are 100 plus years old, requiring minimal contact when handled."

### The solution

The Lambton Branch has four Fujitsu SV600s for supporting the Archives and other miscellaneous projects, including scanning high school yearbooks, newspapers, and church and funeral records. Lambton plays an important role in helping the Archives preserve and make accessible historical and family documents for genealogical researchers. Teskey's team of four volunteer typists recently completed the indexing of births, deaths and marriages from the Petrolia Topic newspaper, dating from 1900 to 1950.

For Petrolia's St. Paul's United Church, Teskey is working on their church records, going as far back as the 1880's. "You can't take apart these old journals," says Teskey. "The SV600 scans them really well and clear" and Teskey calls the SV600 "The best thing on the market" for working with sealed bindings and challenging documents.

Many stray ancestor inquiries come Teskey's way. In the past, order processing could take upwards of a month, using paper files and postal delivery. "By embracing digitization, a stray order can now be delivered in less than 10 minutes" says Teskey. "Searchable PDF has helped streamline our operations." Once a surname is entered as a keyword, all related documents in the file can be quickly identified, and then extracted from the PDF for emailing out to the requester.

### The customer

Country: Canada  
Industry: Genealogy  
Founded: 1961  
Members: 3,500 globally  
Website: [www.ogs.on.ca](http://www.ogs.on.ca)



### The challenge

The Lambton Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society desired a contactless scanner for delicate hard cover books. A flat-bed scanner was not an option because of the risk of permanent damage to a book's spine when pressure is applied during the scanning process. A second key requirement was incorporating searchable PDF.

### The solution

The Lambton Branch selected the Fujitsu ScanSnap SV600 contactless scanner, primarily for supporting the genealogical research conducted at the Lambton Archives Centre. The SV600 is ideal for hard cover books and other sealed bindings, and a wide variety of paper documents, including personal diaries, rare photographs, atlases, newspapers, and land records.

All scanned files are converted to searchable PDF. By digitizing, the Society can now process stray ancestor orders in minutes, compared to upwards of a month, using paper files and postal delivery.

## The benefits

- A contactless scanner, ideal for delicate hard cover books
- Flattens and corrects curve distortion of text in book gutter
- Easy creation of searchable PDF or Word files
- Improves image quality of commonly found stained documents
- Scans large-size documents (up to 11" x 17") and bound books

## The benefits

The Fujitsu SV600 replaced a flat-bed scanner that was suitable for ring binders with removable pages, but unable to accommodate fragile hard cover books or large-format photographs, according to Teskey.

"The SV600 scanner solved our challenges, not only being an overhead, contactless scanner, but enabling books to be searchable," says Teskey.

The SV600 is designed to automate repetitive tasks. The scanner automatically identifies the centre of a book and the software enables the splitting of a two page image into two individual pages. To initiate scanning users can simply press SCAN for each page or they can enable the SV600's Page-Turning Detection function which automatically scans whenever a page is turned.

"Some of our yearbooks are brand new and you need to hold the book open using your thumbs," says Teskey. "When viewing an image post-scan, the SV600's software allows you to circle the area of the thumb with the cursor and the software removes it from the image."

Teskey receives many old newspaper obituaries. The SV600's Multiple Document Detection function allows multiple obituaries to be scanned and cropped in a single pass. "We place obituaries on the Fujitsu scanning pad – as many as 10, a half-inch apart – and the SV600 automatically scans them as separate .jpgs," says Teskey. "Everything is indexed by name and made available on our website."

The SV600 offers Automatic Image Correction, by recognizing if text is upside down, and automatically rotating the book to the proper orientation. Additionally, if a document is slightly misaligned during scanning, it is de-skewed for correct alignment.

When working with old documents, legibility is a common issue. "Old books are often stained and need improvement in image quality," says Teskey. "You can easily adjust the contrast, by making a page brighter."

For instance, when scanning a 48 year old handwritten document during initial testing, Teskey noted: "The background colour was brightened and the handwriting became clearer" on the SV600 compared to the image quality of a portable hand-scanner.

Additionally, the highly directed LED lamp of the SV600, achieves a consistent brightness across the entire document surface, optimizing the colour intensity of scanned pages, even in poorly lit rooms.

## Products and services

- Fujitsu ScanSnap SV600 with Nuance® Power PDF Standard

## Conclusion

The Lambton Branch has not only improved its workflow by digitizing paper file documents, but replaced the need for photocopying paper, helping reduce its environmental footprint. "I don't have to take up half of my house with paperwork," says Teskey. "We are not storing 48 boxes of paper on floors, creating paper trails, and destroying anymore trees." In fact, all of the scanned publications can now fit on five USB keys.

The SV600 is integral to the Archive's disaster recovery from events such as a fire or flood. "Many of the family history books [housed at the Archives] are one of a kind," says Teskey. "If anything happens to the Archives we still have those family histories. By digitizing, we can always recopy the books for replacement on the shelf." Teskey adds:

**"The Fujitsu ScanSnap SV600 scanners are central to digitizing archival paper file documents and helping preserve Lambton County's family histories for future generations."**



*The SV600 is ideal for scanning delicate hard cover books.*

"The days of sifting through massive paper files and mailing hard copies are quickly disappearing," according to Teskey, as digitization takes hold across the Society. Over 20 of the branch locations have standardized on the SV600 today. The Society is not only improving productivity, but is better serving the needs of its many members from around the world.

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