

Image Processing System RFP Concerns

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The following are areas on concern that an agency should consider when developing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for an Image Processing System or Image Processing Services.

BASIC N.J.A.C. REQUIREMENTS:

The certification of Public Records Image Processing Systems is governed by the New Jersey Administrative Code, Title 15 Department of State, Chapter 3 Records Retention:

- Subchapter 4: Image Processing of Public Records (<http://www.njarchives.org/links/njac-15-3-4.html>)
- Subchapter 5: Certification of Image Processing Systems (<http://www.njarchives.org/links/njac-15-3-5.html>)

The following are some basic system requirements that should be met when purchasing and implementing a public records image processing solution:

- **15:3-4.3(e)**: preference for WORM (Write Once Read Many) storage media;
- **15:3-4.3(f)**: preference for systems which physically store the index entries related to an image, including the creation or scanning date, with the image;
- **15:3-4.3(g)**: system conformance to a standard architectural framework for open systems standards;
- **15:3-4.3(h)**: open systems environment;
- **15:3-4.5(a)**: requirement for TIFF image;
- **15:3-4.5(c)**: preference shall be given to systems built with relational database technology using Structured Query Language (SQL);
- **15:3-4.5(d)**: workflow and file folder processing software shall be written in standard, portable programming languages;
- **15:3-4.6(a)1**: imaging systems shall not be capable of altering a public record as scanned, except for standard computer-enhancement routines used to improve the legibility of scanned documents. (i.e. Multifunction Devices (MFDs) *will not* be considered as part of a certifiable solution);
- **15:3-4.5(e)1**: a scanning density with a minimum of 200 dots per inch (dpi) or more is required for scanning bitonal documents containing text or numerals no smaller than six point type;
- **15:3-4.5(e)2**: a scanning density with a minimum of 300 dots per inch (dpi) is required for bitonal engineering drawings, maps, and other documents with background detail;
- **15:3-4.8(a)**: a security subsystem and procedures for system administration and file access that cannot be disabled or circumvented, except for properly authorized functions of a systems manager, shall be provided for all image processing systems used for keeping public records;
- **15:3-4.8 (b)**: imaging systems shall not be capable of altering a record as scanned and/or recorded, except for standard computer-enhancement routines used to improve the legibility of scanned documents;
- **15:3-4.8(c)**: means of control shall be established and maintained to prevent unauthorized creation, addition, alteration, deletion, or deterioration of any imaged record;

- **15:3-4.8 (d):** Corrections or additions to records shall be recorded as new documents and maintained in the recordkeeping system along with the original record;

SCANNER INFORMATION/REQUIREMENTS:

- Does the scanner(s) allow for imaging at the following resolutions?
 - 200dpi required for small format documents (e.g. correspondence and forms)
 - 300dpi required for large format documents (e.g. engineering drawings)
- What type of scanner does your agency need?
 - Flatbed
 - Auto Document Feed
 - Medium Speed
 - High Speed
 - Large Format

IMAGE CAPTURE SOFTWARE:

- Does the capture software save the image as a TIFF (Tagged Image File Format)? [Group III and IV compression is allowable]
 - Derivative files may be created from TIFF image (PDF, JPG, JP2000, BMP, GIF, etc.), however, original image **MUST** be TIFF.
- Does it have OCR and/or zonal OCR capabilities?
- Does it include redacting tools?
- Does the system produce Scanning Logs?
- Does the system produce hardware/software logs?

DATABASE/RETRIEVAL SOFTWARE:

- What kind of storage database would be used?
 - SQL Server, Oracle, Access, etc.
- Does it have an Open Architecture at the Application Programming Interface (API) level?
- Will your agency be storing images on-line, near-line, or off-line?
- What type of security/levels of access does the system have?
- What type of retrieval software will be used?
- Does it have an Open Architecture at the Application Programming Interface (API) level?
- Is the system web-enabled?
- Indexing should include at a minimum the identical indexing access as the existing records management system.
- Does the system produce hardware/software logs?
- Does the system require a dedicated server?

BACKUP:

- Operating System must be backed up.
- Database must be backed up.
- Does system create a bootable backup?

- What media will be used to backup?
 - Optical Disk (WORM)
 - CD
 - DVD
 - Magnetic Tape
 - Microfilm
 - Does the vendor have a solution that will allow the agency to create microfilm from the images?
 - Can the vendor provide this service as a service bureau?
 - 16mm film is appropriate for small format documents, while 35mm is required for Class C drawing and larger
- Can the vendor provide offsite storage of the paper records, digital records, or microfilmed records that is in compliance with State record storage standards?
- Can the vendor supply a Hot/Cold site?

SUPPORT:

- Provides Training and Technical Support
- Provide Operational and Administrative Manuals for users
- Provides periodic upgrades and updated versions of system
- What tools are available for support?
- Do you provide hardware maintenance?
- Company Information
 - Where are you located?
 - Do you have local representation?
 - How long have you been in business?
 - Would you be able to provide us with financial information regarding your company?
- Have you done work for State, Federal, or municipal/local agencies?
- Are you aware of State laws regarding the imaging of public records and the associated standards and certification process promulgated and coordinated by the Division of Archives and Records Management?
- What type of assistance in the certification process can you provide?

SERVICE BUREAU RFP CONCERNS:

The Division of Archives and Records Management (DARM) has recently been made aware of several RFPs for service bureau public records image processing system solutions where the RFP contains several inaccurate claims or places inappropriate demands upon successful vendors. As you may be currently (or in the future) putting together RFPs for image processing systems or contemplating the use of such services, we would like to bring to your attention this language that we consider inappropriate:

- *“Vendor’s will apply a label with the words “RAISED SEAL” next to or in close proximity to the raised certification seal on the large documents. This sticker may not obscure any part of the image.”*

This procedure was suggested by a vendor to us at DARM to deal with illegible seals nearly three years ago and our response was: *"We feel your solution to index them in a similar way to other poorly legible drawings (ID'ing them as records not to be destroyed) is reasonable and appropriate."* Yet we have always maintained that every attempt should be made to "raise" the seal utilizing a charcoal stick similar to the way it has been done for microfilming. The need to have the seal legible in the scanned image is that it leads to document's validity as a true and accurate representation of the original document. The signatures and seals of such documents are mandated in N.J.A.C. 13:27 and 13:40. Therefore, if a seal is illegible post-imaging, the original should not be destroyed.

- *"Vendor's process must have been reviewed by NJDARM and a letter issued by NJDARM indicating that the process of scanning, recording and duplicating will allow the Municipality's paper files to be permanently destroyed according to NJDARM standards and Practices."*

This is an impossible condition to meet as we DO NOT issue such letters. To issue such a letter would be tantamount to saying the vendor is certified and the State Records Committee (SRC) DOES NOT certify vendors, hardware, or software; the SRC certifies the records management policies and procedures of an agency and grants a variance to their records retention schedule.

- *"Vendor must provide a 35mm microfilm master and backup copy of all scanned images."*

DARM does have a requirement that an archival quality silver-halide master reel of microfilm with the appropriate targets, resolution, and density be created and maintained as an alternative eye-readable backup for long term (retention \geq 10 years) and/or permanent public records that have been imaged. DARM DOES NOT have such a requirement requiring a duplicate copy of the microfilm; in fact we discourage the creation of a duplicate copy of the microfilm as an unnecessary expenditure. In the past the duplicate copy, typically a diazo copy was a "use copy" for retrieval purposes so as not to damage the silver halide master; with the digital images there is no need for a "use copy".

- *“Vendor must combine small and large documents in order to display the entire file record sequentially on 35mm microfilm.”*

DARM does not have such a requirement; in fact we encourage the use of microfilm sized appropriately for the document type it contains. The intent of the microfilm backup is to have an eye-readable version of the record for disaster prevention and recovery or for future migration if the digital system completely fails. If it were to be a “use copy” we would agree that the records should be completely combined on a single reel. However, since the microfilm IS NOT for retrieval, we contend it would be more cost effective to put small format documents on 16mm microfilm.

- *“The State Records Committee (SRC) must have certified a similar application installed by the Vendor at another New Jersey Governmental Agency, in compliance with the standards, procedures and guidelines adopted under N.J.A.C 15-3:-4 image processing for public records [sic].”*

As noted previously, the SRC DOES NOT certify vendors and this requirement is tantamount to saying it does. Certification granted to one agency using a particular piece of hardware, software, and/or vendor does not guarantee certification for another agency. This is due to the fact the agency must demonstrate an understanding and commitment to the whole records management process that surrounds a document imaging system, including data migration and disaster prevention and recovery.

- *“Vendor will provide the Agency with a Data Migration plan for the Vendor’s software.”*

The Data Migration Plan that is required for certification is essentially a “self-awareness” statement regarding the issues of data migration and a commitment by the agency as to how it will address data migration. While the vendor may assist in drafting this, it is ultimately the agency’s responsibility.

- *“Vendor must provide references of municipalities or government agencies within the State of New Jersey. Vendor’s references must include at least 5 municipalities that have completed a conversion of building permits and associated large drawings.”*

You should be aware that the completion of a conversion project is not the same as certification. To date there are a total of sixteen (16) certified public record image processing systems at the municipal level (see: <http://www.njarchives.org/links/certified-systems.html#m>). Of those only one (1) is for large format documents conducted by a service bureau; one (1) is for large format documents conducted in-house; and one (1) is for permit files conducted in-house. Additionally, note that the microfilm backup requires the Public Records Image Processing System Certificate Number on the Certificate of Authenticity. For a vendor to claim to have completed a project including microfilm backup beyond these three certified systems is to have done a disservice to that agency, as the microfilm DOES NOT meet state standards and would have to be redone.

- *“Vendor must include documentation that NJDARM has approved previously 35mm microfilm from Vendor or has reviewed Vendor’s process for creating microfilm.”*

DARM does not have such a requirement. In fact any likely successful bidder will be sub-contracting this work out to the same out-of-state microfilm service bureau.

Regardless, we still require microfilm samples each and every time even if we know the vendor and have inspected microfilm in that past from their organization. There are NO blanket approvals for microfilm and passing a previous inspection is no guarantee for passing inspection in the future.

- *“Vendor must include documentation that the New Jersey State Records Committee has approved a similar system installed by the vendor”*
As noted previously, the SRC DOES NOT certify vendors and this requirement is tantamount to saying it does.

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