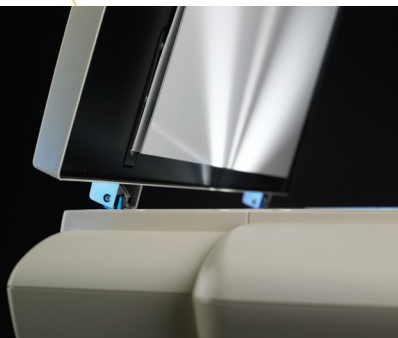




[Business Cases]



Contex COPYmate® 18 Scanner Helps Ontario County Archive Preserve Valuable Historical Records

The Simcoe County Archives - a county archive that collects, preserves, and provides access to historical records documenting 200 years of local history.

Challenge - converting collections of large, fragile, one-of-a-kind original documents to digital format to create an accessible electronic archive.

Solution - a Contex COPYmate® 18 flatbed scanner with WIDEimage software.

Results - the Simcoe County Archives uses the COPYmate 18 to convert high-demand collections of newspapers, drawings, and photographs.

“Contex COPYmate 18 has had a positive impact on our archives in many ways — our budget, our staff resources, our productivity.” Bruce Beacock, B.A., County Archivist, Simcoe County Archives

Profile - The Simcoe County Museum and Archives

Museums and historical archives provide a window into the past, enabling genealogists, historians or anyone interested in local history to glimpse first-hand how previous generations lived. Simcoe County, located in central Ontario some 60 miles north of Toronto, is one of the fastest growing counties in the region. As a result, preserving the county's past is a priority for the Simcoe County Archives, Ontario's first county-level archive and one of the most highly regarded regional archives in Ontario. Established in 1966 as part of the Simcoe County Canadian Centennial project, the county archive serves two important missions—to preserve and promote Simcoe County's cultural heritage and to collect, preserve, and provide public access to the county's documentary history. Today, the Simcoe County Archives maintains an extensive collection of maps, photographs, posters, original manuscripts, magnetic and digital recordings, newspapers and other records, many of which bear witness to life two hundred years ago. The Archives not only preserves traditional historical records but also maintains the permanent corporate municipal record of the County of Simcoe, the City of Barrie, and the county's 16 constituent municipalities.

Challenge

Transforming Fragile, One-of-a-Kind Documents into a Digital Archive. One of the biggest challenges archivists face is finding a way to safeguard one-of-a-kind documents, records, and photographs while making them accessible to the public. This is the challenge that faced the Simcoe County Archives. Simcoe County wanted to convert many of its historic documents into digital format to ultimately create an accessible online archive. However, many of the newspapers, drawings, articles, and photographs were so fragile they couldn't be handled with bare hands—much less passed through the rollers of a traditional large-format scanner. What's more, the county was receiving increasing requests for scans of documents that were larger than they could handle.

“We would have to go outside the county at very high expense to get the documents scanned,” recalls Simcoe County Archivist, Bruce Beacock, “people wanted copies of registers, ledgers, tax assessment rolls, and historical documents like large sketches, drawings and newspapers dating back to 1847.” He adds, “Ironically some of the newspapers from the 1800s are in better shape than those from the 1900s because the paper was made of rag which doesn't deteriorate like later papers made from acidic wood pulp. In any case, we needed to handle records from both centuries with utmost care.”

“ From an archival perspective, the scanner’s flatbed design means we can do more work in-house. It’s really easy to use, although it’s a little like learning to drive a Porsche—it’s a high-performance machine and I know I’m still not using it to its potential. ”

Ellen Millar, Assistant Archivist, Simcoe County Archives



1. A large size, flatbed design, and excellent resolution and quality
2. A pathway to creating an online archive for historic and genealogic research
3. Valuable documents are safely digitized without damaging originals
4. Preservation of one-of-a-kind documents that provide a record of small-town life

Solution

Contex COPYmate 18 Makes it Easy to Create an Accessible Digital

Archive. That’s when the Simcoe County Archives turned to Contex. “We asked our IT department to find us a scanner. We originally sent them out looking for an 11 x 17 device because we figured it was the best we could get,” recalls Beacock, “and when they came back with the Contex COPYmate 18 after researching the market, we were delighted. We didn’t know there was a device that could handle large, fragile documents. And we already had a relationship with Contex through the Simcoe County IT department, which was using a Contex Crystal XL 42” scanner to scan engineering and GIS documents.”

The Contex COPYmate 18 flatbed scanner was the right fit for three reasons—its large size, a unique flatbed design that allows archivists to lay the delicate documents down on the glass platen rather than feeding it over rollers, and the scanner’s very high capture resolution. The archive team was convinced, installed the Contex COPYmate 18 in May 2006, and began converting special collections of historical records. The Contex COPYmate 18 combines a clamshell design with 48-bit color capture, high-speed color and black and white scanning, and on-board iJET™ technology with an easily accessible operator panel to enable full scan-to-print or scan-to-file capabilities without requiring an additional PC or software. A large 18” x 24” scan area makes it easy to scan books, textured originals, originals with unlimited thicknesses, and rare, fragile or unusual documents. The scanner employs high-end, 48-bit CCD technology and easy-to-use color calibration for accurate scanner calibration and very high-quality output.

Result

Contex COPYmate 18 is simple to use and gentle on fragile documents

“The quality the Contex COPYmate delivers is excellent” says Simcoe County Archives Assistant Archivist, Ellen Millar, “we’re creating a true historical archive, so we want to preserve the originals exactly as is, blemishes and all. With the COPYmate 18 our image captures are true reproductions down to the smallest detail.” Millar adds “Many of our documents are extremely fragile—they go back about 200 years. With a very fragile original, you want to minimize light exposure from the scanning process as much as possible, just as you would from any direct light source. We have to get it right the first time and the COPYmate 18 helps us do that.” According to Beacock, “We use the scanner to convert high-demand collections and for special projects. What’s great is that it enables us to do a lot more work in-house. It saves contracting fees, which can be very high and it saves labor—I don’t have to send a staff member out for three hours to get the documents scanned.” He adds, “We recently used the COPYmate 18 for a special 40th Anniversary Celebration in conjunction with the Simcoe County Museum and put together a visual presentation of portrait photography from the mid-19th century entitled “The Faces of History.” He continues, “We selected 40 portraits of babies, children, farmers, clergymen and fire chiefs—all typical images of a young developing society—and used the scanner for the portraits that were very large or needed high quality resolution. We then produced them in a large, two foot by three foot format and displayed them in the museum. The results were outstanding. We wouldn’t have been able to use many of the photos if we didn’t have the COPYmate scanner.” Today, the Simcoe County Archives is realizing tremendous benefits with the Contex COPYmate 18 flatbed scanner. Beacock concludes, “It has had an extremely positive impact on our archives in many ways—on our budget, our staff resources, our productivity, and because it’s a very good machine, the excellent quality and resolution of our scanned images.”

About Contex

CONTEX is a high-technology global manufacturing company of over 500 employees around the world. CONTEX is the leading provider of large-format color and monochrome scanners, 3D printers and an innovative developer of advanced software for these products. CONTEX distributes its products through a worldwide distribution network with representatives and distributors in more than 100 countries. CONTEX has subsidiaries in the United States, China and Japan.

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