

Success Story

Government

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ABBYY Technologies Save Government Agency Days

Inefficient OCR and the need to correct scanned timesheet information was costing Montgomery County forty working days a month. Four people spent every other week scanning and correcting timesheets. Worse, even more time was lost due to manual invoice processing in the county's Accounts Payable department until ABBYY FlexiCapture resolved both issues with intelligent, automatic form capture.

"With ABBYY, the end result is quality work. It's definitely been an improvement in quality and efficiency."

*- Mayland Lin, Department of Technology Services,
Montgomery County Government, Rockville, MD*

ABBYY Software Saves Government Agency Days

What began as a pilot program to improve timesheet-processing is now transforming Montgomery County's invoicing and accounts payable procedures into an adept system that dramatically reduces inefficiencies and greatly improves accuracy.

With more than 10,000 timesheets to process every other week, Montgomery County previously spent two days scanning documents and another three days reviewing them to correct errors in key pieces of data – such as employees' identification numbers, according to Mayland Lin, Department of Technology Services at Montgomery County Government in Rockville, Md.

However, when the department heard about ABBYY FlexiCapture – and that it could be integrated seamlessly with their existing ZyLABS' Zylmage imaging solution, – Lin decided to investigate, and ultimately invested in ABBYY's sophisticated data-capture software. For some processes, the department had been using a zonal OCR program - which was highly sensitive and all-too-often inaccurate, Lin said. In others, staff keyed in data – a more accurate but far more time-consuming process. "FlexiCapture", says Lin, "anchors on key fields in a document, and then accurately extracts the information – vastly improving and abbreviating the once time-intensive process."

Previously, according to Lin, a great deal of manpower was wasted. "Now", she says, "we're able to cut down and do scanning, data extraction and QA in only 3 days with the help of one employee, rather than over the course of 5 days and 4 full time staff."

ABBYY® FlexiCapture®



**Department of
Technology Services,
Montgomery County
Government, Rockville, Md.**

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Multiple Uses

Like any organization, Montgomery County receives thousands of pieces of paperwork a week. Lin and her team considered different ways in which the county would benefit from ABBYY's solution, hoping to expand their time-savings and efficiencies to other departments.

"Before ABBYY, they had been using ZyLAB for two or three years," said Ray Belden, sales manager at American Heritage, an ABBYY solution provider. Their document archiving system had full-page, OCR capability, but no forms-processing capabilities. "Today if you are extracting an identification number or date or any piece of information, you simply tell FlexiCapture what to look for and how to locate it."

Plus, Montgomery County also processes the Department of Liquors' invoices for the state-run stores. And in May 2006, Belden integrated ABBYY's solution into their existing ZyLAB solution. "The county immediately enjoyed vastly improved accuracy and a speedier invoice-processing schedule," said Lin.

But the county did not stop there. Having already achieved such terrific results from its timesheet and liquor store applications, Montgomery County expanded its use of FlexiCapture into its entire Accounts Payable department.

"They are a neat customer because they use FlexiCapture for processing lots of different things for a lot of different departments," said Belden. "They save the information scanned in through ABBYY into an image that is stored in ZyLAB's imaging program. They process all of the Department of Liquor's invoices. They also use it in their Accounts Payable department, so every vendor that submits a bill to Montgomery County comes through the ABBYY system."

Implementation

Before launching into its initial foray into ABBYY's solutions, Montgomery County spent six months discussing various solutions to their paper nightmare with Belden. "I had talked to them quite a bit and they were excited about the ABBYY products," Belden said. "They needed lots of technical support. Because they are a government IT department, they don't have a lot of manpower."

To make matters even more complex, the county had many disparate paper-based systems in place – forms that used a variety of fonts, printers with varying degrees of clarity and a veritable rainbow of paper and print colors. "If you look at the meta data, it's gobbledygook," Lin said.

Unlike the earlier scanning system, ABBYY's solution is flexible and forgiving of human or technical foibles. As Lin says, "ABBYY FlexiCapture technology intelligently analyzes the elements and data on the county's timesheets and invoices, and captures the critical data elements the county needs to do its work."

"With other products, if the document's not aligned perfectly, it doesn't work," Lin continued. "When the page was off a hair, our old OCR system couldn't read it. With ABBYY, the end result is quality work. It's definitely been an improvement in quality and efficiency. ABBYY's OCR engine is one of the best in the business."

Forward-Looking Statements

Having enjoyed the initial results of its year-long work with ABBYY's solution, the county plans to further extend both its use of the vendor's software, its partnership with American Heritage and its investment in computerized solutions.

"Montgomery County is in the process of putting in an electronic system for timesheets, but it's going to be at least another two years before it's completed," Lin says. "And I have a lot more potential for using ABBYY programs. As you can imagine, ABBYY has a lot of powerful tools that we can use to improve our productivity here. I want to leverage our continuing investment in ABBYY and the training Ray provided to my department."

The Challenge:

Inaccurate, time-consuming scanning of more than 10,000 timesheets twice a month; managing the county-run liquor stores' inventory and receipts.

The Result:

ABBYY FlexiCapture shortened the timesheet processing cycle from 5 to 3 days. Additionally, ABBYY FlexiCapture helped Montgomery County to automate capture of invoices and reduce manual work in the AP department.

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Learn more at www.ABBYY.com/flexicapture