Foxit

UMASS AMHERST IMPROVES RESOURCE-SHARING WITH FOXIT OCR TECHNOLOGY

University of Massachusetts Amherst

CASE STUDY

SUMMARY

UMass Amherst is a large university in central Massachusetts with very high research activity. As such, its Interlibrary Loan unit (ILL) processes an enormous number of PDFs that they both create themselves and receive from other libraries. ILL patrons include faculty, staff, graduate students, and undergraduate students at UMass Amherst, as well as other academic or public libraries and even Massachusetts businesses.

In resource-sharing, the best practice is to OCR your documents before submitting. However, the software the ILL was using needed to be monitored, resulting in a cumbersome and inefficient process. After utilizing PDF Compressor, the ILL was able to alleviate these issues and adopt a faster and less-demanding workflow.

> **"There is such a push in libraries and in resource-sharing right now to deliver OCR'd materials.**
>
> – K. Zdepski, Resource Sharing Librarian

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

In a typical month, UMass Amherst ILL scans about 210 transactions for their own patrons, and about 450 transactions for other libraries, averaging about 30 pages each for a total of around 19,800 scanned pages per month. The scans they create themselves are mostly from physical books, which must then go into a shared folder for others to access.

In the resource-sharing community, it is best practice to always supply OCR'd PDFs when possible, but the software the ILL was using required someone to physically sit there waiting for it to process. With the thousands of documents, the ILL was processing each month, and especially since the computers were older, the portion of time spent sitting and waiting was significant. This process was both time-consuming and inefficient, not to mention bad for staff morale.

SOLUTION

The ILL decided to test PDF Compressor to OCR their scans. Due to cost-effectiveness, the software ended up being implemented into the library's workflow. The ILL now uses Foxit PDF Compressor to OCR the documents they're creating, before sending them to their patrons or to other libraries. PDF Compressor enabled them to produce more scans in a shorter amount of time, as well as eliminated the need for a staff member to monitor the process.

RESULTS

Using their old software, it took about a minute and a half to scan and clean up 3 pages. After switching to PDF Compressor, the ILL was able to cut that time down by 1/3. When compared to their previous OCR service they were able to scan 17% more pages per hour with Foxit PDF Compressor. The difference amounts to being able to

complete one more chapter or article scan per hour. During Covid-19 the team saved hundreds of hours of time. With limitations on how many staff can be onsite, every moment is in high demand. As Zdepski recalls, "it's been really critical for us to find anything that we can do...to cut time that someone's basically just sitting waiting for a process to run, and to move that process somewhere else."

An unexpected benefit that the ILL discovered was that PDF Compressor was catching and fixing pages that were in different orientation. As their cleanup software doesn't allow for rotating pages, it was a pleasant surprise that PDF Compressor was able to help the library improve the quality of documents they're outputting.

Implementing PDF Compressor enabled the ILL to save time, increase efficiency, and put less strain on their staff. The library can also be confident that they are producing good quality text searchable documents for their patrons, with pages all in the correct orientation. In the future, the library is planning on expanding their use of Foxit PDF Compressor for their Reserves and Special Collections units, particularly as e-Reserves are more important than ever right now.

> **"Offloading that process from a person waiting for it, to it running in the background...has worked really beautifully and I would definitely recommend it.**

BENEFITS

Objective	Benefits Achieved
▶ Increase the speed of OCR processing	✓ PDF Compressor enabled UMass Amherst to OCR their scans 1.5x faster compared to their old system.
▶ Reduce the need for manual labor in the OCR process	✓ The ILL was able to offload the OCR process to run in the background, so staff doesn't need to monitor the system.
▶ Improve quality of output	✓ PDF Compressor corrects pages in incorrect orientation, so the ILL can have confidence in the scans they're creating.
▶ Improve employee morale	✓ Staff no longer need to sit and wait for the system to process, easing the strain on employees and freeing up their time to tackle other tasks.

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