Making the Most of Capture Automation with OCR Technology

For over 70% of organizations, scanning is the leading method of document capture. However, AIIM Research finds that only 13% of those organizations leverage Optical Character Recognition (OCR) to automate the extraction of data from scanned documents. Unfortunately for the other 87%, they are missing out on one of the greatest benefits of capture automation. OCR is an essential capture solution that provides the accuracy and efficiency organizations need to gain valuable insight into business intelligence.

OCR is a powerful technology designed to convert various document types and image-based files (PDF, Word®, Excel) into text searchable documents containing editable data. With OCR-assisted capture solutions, key pieces of data are automatically extracted for processing, which speeds up productivity and collaboration between departments. Wondering if OCR technology is right for your business? Let's explore four common data capture inefficiencies and how to go about solving them with capture automation solutions:

1. **Tedious Manual Data Entry**
   Manually entering document data is time-consuming, slow, and prone to error. Luckily, OCR-assisted data indexing solutions, such as KeyFree Indexing, eliminate data entry typing for good! After scanning documents from your office multifunction printer (MFP) or production scanner, they can be immediately captured into an Enterprise Content Management (ECM) System or file repository, and are ready to be indexed. The appropriate user will be notified via email that a document needs their attention, and with a simple point and click over the number, word, or phrase of data needed, the information is accurately extracted - no typing needed! By simply clicking, the OCR process is faster, efficient, and more accurate than retyping data that has already been recognized by the system. KeyFree Indexing is designed primarily for lower volume applications of typically less than 200 records per week.

2. **Repetitive Document Formats**
   When working with the same vendors over long periods of time, it's common to see similar formats on documents you often receive. Whether it's an invoice, purchase order, or even bill of lading - if it's structured, the information can be captured through powerful OCR automation. By creating custom Zonal templates or Marker Zones, information like vendor name, invoice number, address, and date can be captured from the same areas of a document, each time it's scanned. OCR will recognize the document type and intelligently look towards the document's specific zone to pull information. Not only is this a huge time saver, but this cost-effective solution can dictate the structure of your data, keeping the format consistent, even with high document or batch scanning volumes - ensuring captured information is always accurate.

3. Variety of Document Types

So what about those documents that have names and numbers scattered all over the page? Well with unstructured data capture, OCR provides an easy way to extract the data you need to process orders faster and improve business insight. When you're working with documents that lack any definable structure, there are a number of options including Repeating Zones, Directional Zones, Pattern Matching, and others, that will intelligently locate and extract the appropriate data. For example, with capture automation and the power of OCR, specific keyword variations can be automatically searched for (Invoice, Inv., Invoice #) along with other iterations of the word to streamline the indexing process. Document data can then be indexed quickly and efficiently, eliminating time consuming tasks that take away from employee priorities.

4. Extensive Item Orders

If you're looking for the easiest - and most advanced - method to gather and process data from your invoices, Line Item Data Extraction is the solution for you! Instead of scanning a page for a vendor name, you can set specific pre-defined attributes to locate and extract key pieces of data. The software reads across the page, captures the data, and moves to the line below, repeating the process. A table like structure is then created where it populates the search results, ultimately reducing invoice processing time while also allowing for integration with your other accounting software solutions (QuickBooks®, Sage®, Microsoft Dynamics®). Line Item Data Extraction organizes document data into an editable and easily accessible, user-friendly table to streamline daily processing.

Whether you work with hundreds, thousands, or tens of thousands of documents per month, capture automation and OCR technology can simplify the search, index, and retrieval of documents, regardless of structure or format. Now that you know the benefits of OCR, it's time to make sure you're a part of the 13% who are establishing a competitive edge. If you're ready to take advantage of capture automation, contact Square 9 Softworks today!

Digital Marketing Specialist, **Alyssa Anderson,** is the voice behind Square 9 Softworks's weekly blog articles. Committed to communicating today's common challenges in paper based processes, Alyssa provides in depth analysis into the document management industry and the solutions that accommodate the needs of end user communities. For additional information, please contact Alyssa at aanderson@square-9.com.