

BIE Homework Sheet

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Read the news article below:

Pushing paper out the office



By Ian Hardy

Click's North America technology correspondent

The idea of the paperless office has been around since the late 1970s but three decades on paper remains hugely popular. Despite this, there are many ways in which organisations are starting to cut their paper consumption.



Are days of the cluttered office desk finally numbered?

One of the first step that many companies take is to turn those reams of paper documents into something much more portable.

One particular technology proving useful for this is Adobe's Portable Data Format.

About 15 years ago this started life as a simple way to preserve the look and feel of documents as they were passed between different operating systems and computers.

Banks, utilities and many other companies now offer statements and bills as downloadable PDFs to help their customers move towards that paperless state.

But, said Diana Helander, group manager at Adobe, it was

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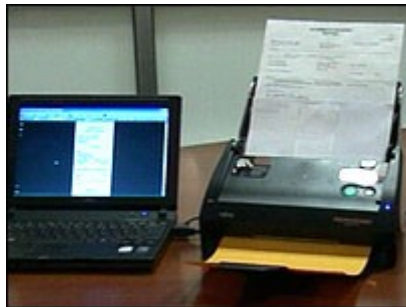
worth keeping up with the latest developments in PDF to get the most out of it.

"What you lose if you don't use the current version of PDF is the opportunity to do things like include more dynamic content, like Flash; capturing information from a website, say if you make an online purchase and you want to keep the confirmation of that purchase as a PDF for your records instead of printing it out to paper," she said.

Scanner solutions

Another way to get rid of paper is to scan the documents and turn them into digital facsimiles. The relentless march of technology means today's scanners, even those found in the home, are more like the very expensive ones big corporations use.

They are capable of processing each sheet in a second or two, regardless of the shape, size or orientation of documents. Character recognition software means that the documents become instantly searchable. The latest scanners can even recognise logos and will categorize each item automatically.



PDF files and scanners are essential parts of the paperless office

Even better many government agencies now accept scanned documents as readily as the real thing.

But it is not just big business and big government that are making better use of scanners. Small firms are benefiting too.

They have proved a boon to a medical office that must keep track of multiple patient documents generated at different times and requested by different people.

There, everything is scanned and available in one place on a secure server to those who need the information immediately.

"With filing cabinets and old paperwork you can always lose, you can always misfile it," says business manager Reuvin Alon. "When I need the papers, when I need some kind of information about the patient, I always have it.

~~All have a lot of papers and charts, so if at a certain point of~~
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Having read the article you need to write a 500 word report about what you believe ICT will look like in the future?

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