ESTIMATING PROJECTS

Estimating Production Projects

INTRODUCTION

Microfilm and digital production project billing is made up of three elements: document preparation, images produced and post-production options.

DOCUMENT PREPARATION RATES

IRC bills per 1000 documents prepared in order to assure our customers that they can expect our employees to prepare records at a minimum pre-determined level of hourly production. This rate varies due to the hardware with which documents are secured, type of documents, size of documents and mix of these documents.

The preparation cost to make the documents camera or scanner ready is based on man hours required. The criteria for production ready status includes assuring the records are in the proper order within the filing system, removing all hardware such as staples, paper clips and freeing the documents from fasteners used to attach the documents to the file folders. Other critical steps to assure smooth production of the documents is that similar formatted documents are all facing the same direction.

The preparation phase is also where the controls and indexing system are established. All record management systems require that a method of organization is established and adhered to in an ongoing basis. Detailed indexing of information determine film or scanning targets that are required to be inserted in with the documents.

IRC uses zebra targets to identify major category changes on film These targets are particularly eye-catching in manual retrieval systems. Automated retrieval systems use marks at the bottom of the filmed frame to actuate a counter system. Blip indexing includes the number of the blip that identifies the category or file being retrieved. Indexing that requires more than three field indexing will raise the preparation rate.

Our set up charge for a scanning form includes predetermining each field to be OCRed and its location on the lead form. Each document that has that field format will be used to create the database of information to be retrievable. Any additional documents in the file following the lead form will be attached in a multi-page TIFF image.

PRODUCTION RATES

The production rate is billed by number of images produced per man-hour. Microfilm is available in 2 sizes of film. The size of film used is determined by the size of the original document. 35mm film production cameras are used to accommodate oversized documents such as maps, large journals, abstracts, plats and newspapers. Most business documents are computer report size or smaller and can be filmed on the most cost-effective size of 16mm microfilm. Digital production can be determined by the number bytes required to store a document's information on a CD-ROM.

You approximate the number of images required in one linear inch of storage space in order to estimate the volume of images anticipated. Measure one inch of records as they sit in the storage unit (drawer, shelf, or box), then measure the total number of linear inches to be filmed.

For example, you count 175 images (documents with 2 sides are 2 images) per inch, and measure 5 24 inch file drawers with 20 inches of records in each drawer. 175 X (5x20) = 17,500 images on a planetary camera. For rotary filming of 2-sided documents like checks you only need to count the number of documents in that the camera films both sides at a time.

This process must be repeated for each category of record because time cards take up much more room in a drawer than checks. Board minutes are single sided and a standard size, while accounts payable files have every size, shape and thickness of document imaginable. Plats are in numbered cabinets and can be readily estimated. Densely written documents require more bytes in scanning than scarcely written documents.

POST PRODUCTION OPTIONS

Our customers are accomplishing many things when they convert their records to an alternative media other than paper. They automatically increase security by producing a second copy of the records on a master roll of film or master read-writeable CD-ROM that they hope to never need. The master camera negatives of the microfilm are guaranteed to last 100 years or more. The certified master rolls are admissible in court as original documents. The CD-ROM master disk life has not been determined but is currently estimated between 5-7 years. In this case, the security master copy is the only requirement and all costs have been accounted for in the above processes, except the cost of off site-storage of the microfilm or CD-ROM. Absolute security can be obtained when storing the camera negatives or disks in a safety deposit box for $50 per year.

Many customers are converting their documents to realize the space savings of film or digital storage but still anticipate accessing the information on an ongoing

infrequent basis. You will reduce the space these records occupy by over 97%. In this case, each roll of film or CD-ROM should be duplicated to create a working copy of the records. The anticipated volume of images per roll or disk can be determined on our production rate sheets. Determining the number of documents per roll or CD-ROM allows you to determine how many duplicate copies will be necessary to produce.

If you have a large project you can significantly lower the duplication costs by specifying 215' film to be used rather than the standard 100' foot film. Keeping in mind that there is twice as much film to go through to find your required document. If you are using automated retrieval equipment, there is no reason to not save yourself money by specifying 215' film.

Estimating Shredding Projects

INTRODUCTION

Shredding project billing is made up of three elements: pick up and transportation charges, document preparation rates and shredding rates.

PICK UP AND TRANSPORTATION CHARGES

A minimum pick up charge is billed for each pick up of records requested and includes the first hour of labor, additional labor hours are billed at a slightly higher rate. Approximately 1500 pounds of documents in consistently sized boxes can be loaded from curbside in one hour.

Damaged boxes must be repaired before loading. Inconsistent sized boxes are harder to stack and load. Loading boxes from storage areas, interior office space and from other levels takes more time.

There is a flat mileage rate for out of town pick ups. This charge can be split between clients in the same area in order to spread the cost of the trip by maximizing our time and equipment. We have a 3.9 liter diesel delivery truck with a 14 ft bed which can transport approximately 6000 pounds per trip.

DOCUMENT PREPARATION RATES

Our shredder can throughput 1/4 to 1/2 inch of paper at a time as it cuts the records into 1/4 inch strips. Thick stapled documents and bound books must be split apart. Large paper clips, rubber bands and file folder fasteners must be removed. File folder fasteners with locks take the most time to remove and carry the highest rate.

Black carbon must be removed and cannot be recycled. 1 inch of carbon makes our 200 pound shredded paper bales unacceptable at the paper mills. Carbons are shredded separately and taken to the landfill or burned.

Preparation rates are applied per pound of records processed. The preparation rates will vary from an additional 5-25% of the shredding rate.

SHREDDING RATES

Shredding rates are applied per pound of records processed. An average full 12x15 inch storage box weighs 35 pounds. An average full 12x24 inch letter size storage box weighs 50 pounds. An average full 14x24 inch legal size storage box weighs 75 pounds. We will return your boxes to you on our next pick up.

We provide 55 gallon plastic barrels to our local regularly scheduled customers at no charge for accumulation of documents for shredding. These barrels average 175 pounds when full.

Evaluating Conversion Projects

CONVERSIONS

Conversion abilities between analog and digital technologies are constantly evolving. There are now very cost effective options for organizations that have made significant investment in one technology but have developed needs for both. Conversions between microfilm and digital media are relatively low cost due to the advantages realized from the initial technology conversion investment from paper records.

Each organization should evaluate its digital retrieval frequencies to determine if a complete backlog conversion from microfilmed documents is necessary or if the new on-demand digitizing microfilm reader printers can serve the need to move or merge their older information on microfilm into the digital environment. Companies that make the decision to pursue electronic records creation or filing can meet their archival requirements by having their digital images transferred to film reducing the need to maintain outdated microfilm cameras or make costly investments in new micrographic equipment. Regardless of the direction of

conversions, a migration schedule must be established to assure that outdated technologies or media are updated to keep the information in a currently usable format.

Conclusion

As you can see, estimating and evaluating projects is just a matter of understanding the process and doing a little math. We hope that this information is helpful in estimating your volumes and related costs for comparison to your in-house costs.

A rule of thumb is to always use your highest number or round up when measuring. This will assure that your estimated volume is accurate and your budget adequate. Although you will inflate your budget a little bit, we have never had a customer complaint regarding a project that came in lower than expected!

Please do not hesitate to contact us for a free estimate guaranteed within 10%.