

Capturing Canada's storied history



PRODUCTS: HD Ultra X and Nextimage 5 software

CHALLENGE

For the staff at the Fort St. John North Peace Museum, searching for information in the archive was like looking for a needle in a haystack. Long retrieval times, however, were nothing compared to the potential of a fire that could wipe out its assets in a matter of seconds.

SOLUTION

The museum installed a Contex large format scanning solution with a document and information management system from Canon. Staffers simply click a button to save the Contex scanned assets to the digital archive, which resides on multiple servers.

RESULTS

It took just a couple of weeks to scan two years' worth of newspaper archives, which are now retrievable from the digital archive in seconds. More than just making everyone's lives easier, the scanning and archiving solution is safeguarding Canada's storied history.



If there was a fire,
history would be lost.

*Heather Sjoblom, Manager/Curator
Fort St. John North Peace Museum*

BACKGROUND

Located in Canada's westernmost province, Fort St. John was a boom town in the 1940s. To document its growth, locals Margaret Lally "Ma" and George Murray pioneered the local Alaska Highway News, a newspaper still published to this day. Much of its 75-year archive resides at the Fort St. John North Peace Museum. Visitors can experience history first hand through re-creations such as a newspaper office, blacksmith's shop, tepee, schoolhouse, and more.

The museum's assets also include land records, maps, genealogical records, photographs, catalogs, and directories.

CHALLENGE

Preserving Canada's history

The North Peace Museum is an active organization, and local residents, distant relatives, and researchers regularly reach out to the staffers for information about the North Peace Region. The searching process was arduous, requiring digging through a microfilm archive or stacks of physical newspapers.



Documents can be brought up thousands of times digitally and only opened once, preserving their original state for as long as possible.

Thomas Whitton, Ideal Office Solutions

Sometimes, the process could take several weeks.

Far worse than long retrieval times, the threat of fire or natural disaster put the Fort St. John North Peace Museum in a precarious situation with its assets. Heather Sjoblom, Manager/Curator, wanted to safeguard the Peace Region's history by creating a digital archive.

SOLUTION

Scan to preserve

The Fort St. John North Peace Museum received a grant from the Peace River Regional District to digitize its assets, starting with the 75-year *Alaska Highway News* newspaper archive.

Thomas Whitton of Ideal Office Solutions recommended a Contex HD Ultra X 36-inch large format scanner with Therefore™ software, an information and document management system from Canon.

The Contex scanning system captures newspaper sheets in seconds. For fragile and deteriorated material, staffers use the scanner's soft-touch settings, which slow the scanning speed. The Contex scanner captures even the faintest blacks and colors. Its scanning software, NextImage, automatically crops the image, ensuring that there are no unnecessary areas in the scan.

Simple adjustments can increase the scanning depth to 15 mm thickness, which allow museum staffers to capture maps and large-scale photographs from its collection. The scanner can also be used to preserve artwork and other items from the community in the future.

With one click, the Contex scanned assets are automatically saved to the Canon digital archive, which boasts as sub-second retrieval time.

The Contex large format scanner enables Heather Sjoblom and her team of volunteers to preserve the history of Canada's westernmost province in British Columbia.



RESULTS

A true investment

In a matter of weeks since the scanning and archiving system was installed, the museum staff and its dedicated team of volunteers have scanned and preserved two years of the weekly *Alaska Highway News*.

"The Contex and Canon solutions are making our lives easier," notes Sjoblom. With detailed indexing in place, museum staffers will be able to quickly respond to requests for photos from a particular year or a snapshot of the front of the paper. Sjoblom hopes one day to have the archive available for the community to access online.

Sjoblom adds, "The scanning and archiving solution is a true investment for the museum, and will be great for future exhibits. We can also use it for school programs, summer camps, and a variety of educational events."

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