Solve the maths problem

Imagine the situation: John Smith, a lawyer, is preparing for a hearing. The key to winning the case is locked inside electronic or hard copies (PDFs, Tiffs, Word files, paper documents, scanned images and more) both from the opposing side and the client – totally over 100,000 documents. How can John find the winning evidence and how much time will it take?

Fair question, isn’t it?

Premier trial law firm in the Middle East shares its solution

Hafez is the leading trial law firm in the Middle East, which masters the largest, most complex and high-profile business disputes in the region. Having broad practice in different industries, the company appears in all courts at trial and appellate level. With long-term experience, the company worked out its own strategy of success.

Every practicing lawyer knows that right and timely discovery of evidences makes most of the victory. But even a small case presupposes massive volumes of records, not to mention big trials. An average legal bureau processes millions of pages of documents per year to deliver winning legal strategies for critical litigation challenges.

So what’s the secret? To cope with large complex cases, prove its high professionalism and earn its reputation of the premier law firm in the Middle East, Hafez needed to optimize the discovery process. The organization has adopted a digital document management system and an e-discovery platform. They made storing, finding and routing documents and content fast and easy.

But there was still a gap between these systems and all the paper documents: they need to be captured and digitized before entering the DMSs. Thus optical character recognition technology became the miraculous magic wand to bridge the gap.
The scope of the project

The task was to capture documents from the clients and the opposing parties (letters, faxes, contracts, financial reports, legal statements, pleadings etc) that came as hard copies, e-mails, PDF-files, images and other popular formats. The documents were in English, French, Spanish and Arabic, which made an additional challenge. The total workflow was about 700,000 pages per year.

After a thorough analysis of the offers, prices, characteristics of the existing solutions and experience of other companies worldwide, Hafez set their choice on ABBYY Recognition Server.

This history of collaboration goes back to 2008, when Hafez installed its first ABBYY OCR product. They started to process internal documents and clients’ papers to digitize the archive and current cases, initially applied to English, French and Spanish and since last year with Arabic OCR.

Close look: how it works

Let’s take a detailed look at the process. A lawyer, like John Smith, gets a new litigation challenge that for sure requires special attention. He gathers all the necessary documents and materials and submits them into the workflow to deliver the winning legal strategy. This is where an operator enters the process to scan paper documents and import the digitized files into ABBYY Recognition Server for further processing.

Thanks to a wide variety of importing options supported, including centralized and decentralized scanning, both major offices – one in Egypt and one in France – collects image-based documents in one place. Using the award-winning ABBYY OCR technology Recognition Server automatically converts the documents into searchable and editable formats with an outstanding accuracy.

The peculiarity of the legal documents is that they should be 100% identical and accurate – both the original paper and the digital document. For this matter ABBYY Recognition Server provides a very handy feature based on accuracy thresholds defined by the organization: the operator in one-click confirms recognition results using a special verification interface supported by internal dictionaries for various languages, including Arabic.
To enable more profound search inside the back-end system operators index the processed documents by assigning special attributes to the recognized files and organizing semi-automatic classification.

The last step of processing is export of the searchable files to 2 back-end workflow systems: DMS and e-discovery platform to review legal papers. The seamless integration of ABBYY Recognition server into existing environment allows to start immediate exploitation of the total solution.

**Victory in clients’ trust, time, money and company’s reputation**

After these few and fast steps the lawyer easily finds necessary evidences and facts in the e-discovery system to put his client in the best position to win, whether at trial, on summary judgment, or through a negotiated resolution. Thus the technologies save time and costs of litigation for both client and the trial law firm.

Hafez has been entrusting ABBYY technologies with the processing of their legal documents, which is crucial for the high quality e-discovery, for already 5 years.

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The company is fully satisfied with the results and characteristics – speed, quality, volume of the processed documents and variety of the supported languages, especially Arabic recognition technologies.

That is the second most widespread script: approximately 200 million people around the world use Arabic as a first language. Hafez, being one of the leading juridical companies in the Middle East, has a huge archive of documents in Arabic that poses unique challenges for other OCR systems due to peculiarities of the language. ABBYY Recognition Server provides superior quality of Arabic text recognition that allowed the company to enable one of the most crucial parts of the workflow.

Today the process involves only five operators, and two server’s administrators for both offices and all cases instead of countless man-hours of highly professional lawyers wasting time and resources on mechanical error-prone and laborious document search. ABBYY Recognition Server delivered a powerful, efficient and easy-to-use document capture that bridged the gap between paper and digital documents.

By providing fast and focus discovery on the key issues, Hafez put their clients in the best position to win, whether at trial, on summary judgment, or through a negotiated resolution, making the organization the most trusted law firm in the Middle East.