



## **New tool Helps convert handwritten docs to digital files**

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<http://www.docucrunch.com/new-tool-helps-convert-handwritten-docs-to-digital-files>

OCR (optical character recognition) has become a surprisingly reliable tool for all kinds of businesses. Converting printed text into a digitally readable and searchable format is now commonplace enough to be included in even the least expensive scanners and multifunctionals.

But OCR can't recognize handwritten material. That's the job of ICR (Intelligent Character Recognition). Companies and government agencies are finding that this ever-improving technology is allowing them to automate large data conversion projects in a way that saves them money and gives them valuable new tools for sorting, analyzing and analyzing handwritten data.

One of the leaders in this field is A2iA, a company whose software is used by government agencies, insurance companies, banks, law firms and transportation companies. The company provides software toolkits along with support for third-party integrators, including service bureaus that are hired to process the flood of incoming data.

Analyzing scanned-in handwriting can never be 100% reliable, thanks to — to put it bluntly — people with really rotten handwriting. But A2iA has developed a technology called IWR (intelligent word recognition) that uses techniques to decipher what it called "graphemes" (word parts) and whole words, even when one or more characters are ambiguous.

Most importantly, the software can derive a numeric grade of the confidence it has in each captured field. Then it allows users to set "confidence thresholds," which redirect less certain documents for either operator verification or for full manual keying. While no handwriting recognition system can do away entirely with human intervention, separating the easy-to-read from the more difficult can produce the same results with a significant lessening of employee hours.

We may be in the digital age, but many businesses and all branches of government still face mountains of handwritten materials, whether forms, applications, letters, checks or write-ups. Automating any part of that task can provide an immediate payback — and the tools are getting more and more powerful, customizable and accurate.