

Readers' Choice 2007

The Market Has Spoken



Ease of Use - Scan
Toshiba

Platinum Award

About the Award:

Scanning is still an evolving technology within the MFP. Scan to email has pretty much become common place for everyone with differentiation between vendors now becoming harder and harder to find with security remaining the biggest divide. While the scan to email feature set may be leveling out, ease of use is another matter altogether, with buyers having very different viewpoints on how easy some manufacturers make the process of setting up the scan to email feature.

The bulk of scanning, in the business world today, however, is centered on email or other communication routing. It is in the form of information processing and the conversion of hard copy into intelligent soft copy that can be fed into a back office system for further automated processing. There is a growing trend toward MFPs offering scanner features that would be common place on a production scanner, but at the present time there is still a large gulf between these two competing technology supply channels.

MFP open architecture platforms, and a growing number of third party software vendors specializing in integrating between scanners and back office applications, is making the role of the MFP as a scanner resource look more and more attractive for many buyers. The big challenge for MFP vendors will be deciding upon how much scanning technology they wish to embrace and implement, at possible additional cost to the user, in their quest to be taken seriously as a bulk scanning resource rather than just a new communication resource.

With scanning relying upon a user to feed information into the device on an exclusive basis, the need to consider ease of use and maintaining maximum user productivity is going to be a critical design element in future MFP generations.

About the Winner:

Toshiba's earliest history is rooted in two companies. In 1875, Tanaka Engineering Works was founded by Hisashige Tanaka, a well-known inventor who had previously built mechanical dolls and a perpetual clock. Under the company name Shibaura Engineering Works, Mr. Tanaka's company became one of Japan's largest manufacturers of heavy electrical apparatus.

Meanwhile, Hakunetsu-sha & Co., Ltd., was established as the first Japanese plant manufacturing electric incandescent lamps. In 1899, the company was renamed Tokyo Electric Co. and had diversified into a manufacturer of consumer products. In 1939, Shibaura Engineering Works and Tokyo Electric Co. merged and the name "Toshiba" was created as a blend of both company's names.

Today Toshiba is one of the world's largest integrated manufacturers of electric and electronic equipment, employing over 165,000 people worldwide. Toshiba's commitment to quality is reflected in its corporate mission statement: "We, the Toshiba Group Companies, based on our total commitment to people and to the future, are determined to create a higher quality of life for all people, and do our part to help ensure that progress continues within the world community."

About Readers' Choice:

The Readers' Choice Awards are the cumulative findings culled from thousands of BERTL surveys. Unlike other industry awards which are chosen by a small group of industry pundits, BERTL Readers' Choice Awards are decided by our readers the most experienced, technically savvy and discerning digital imaging equipment buyers and users in the world.