

described as the "computers' new frontier" by Forbes magazine.⁴ Although several technologies are closely related, this section will deal primarily with imaging - other sections dealing with printing, storage and communications technology must be considered part of the total document/image processing technology.

Imaging technology has been available for a number of years, with it's primary application to date being the scanning of graphic documents. Document input has until recently only been handled by OCR (Optical Character Recognition) devices, which usually placed strict limits on the format of document and type font (e.g. the Machine Readable Passport). More recently, systems are available which scan the input document as a graphic element, and which provide automation tools for handling documents in electronic form, including OCR reading of the text. Document processing tools provided with some systems include indexing, storage/retrieval, archiving, annotation (with voice, text, or graphics), linking of related documents, etc. "A fully-integrated document/image management solution may include an image database, text, graphics, and voice annotation, optical character recognition, text search and retrieval, facsimile transmission and receipt, plus integration with mainframe applications, scanners, image printers, and optical storage."⁵

The effect of this technology is to provide more efficient handling of documents, more effective management of document based systems and automated tools to integrate video, graphics and voice with the document handling functions. This technology will be the foundation on which passport issuance will be based.

Imaging is of critical import to the Passport Office in at least two key areas.

- Digitization of photographs, signatures and other identification features for storage, processing, output onto passport documents, and later recall for comparison purposes.

⁴ *Forbes*, p. 257 - 264, Nov 26, 1990

⁵ *Sun Microsystems, Inc. Document/Image Management Portfolio*, Sun Microsystems, April 1990