

growth. Customers are beginning to see the importance of scanners as an input device.”

He adds that once a document with information is scanned, it goes into a system and it is kept as a database. It is printed only when it is needed as Chan feels that it is part of human nature to prefer reading printouts rather than from a computer screen.

Chan stressed that scanning or document imaging is used for archiving purposes and also for

market forces like customer awareness and competition.

INNOVATIONS

One key concept has gone into most of Fujitsu's products and it has been the reduction of human intervention in these machines, says Chiharu Abe, Assistant Vice President, Financial Solutions at Fujitsu.

“What we are trying to do is to make the machines more user-friendly yet with minimal human

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data input - instead of keying in information, documents could be scanned and saved. This saves time, cost and human power used for data entry work.

Both the consumer and business markets are beginning to see the use for such devices and Fujitsu believes that the market most profitable to it is the corporate market, especially for companies with heavy-duty document scanning and printing requirements.

Organisations with such requirements would include financial institutes (with huge volume of forms) hospitals (huge volume medical records), libraries (with huge a database) and also factories (ISO documentation scanning).

Fujitsu also stressed that the increased awareness for the document imaging or scanner market is also prompted by new regulatory compliance as seen in the United States and in Asia, such as in the Philippines where banks are required to keep electronic copies of their daily transaction documents.

Other awareness motivators include the availability of more software applications in Asia now as more US- and Europe-based companies are setting up offices in Asia and also the declining cost of implementation due to natural

touch by using advanced features. For instances, ultrasonic double feed detection (to detect and prevent multi-feed), auto image rotation, auto blank page deletion, option to purchase thin paper kit and much more.

“The machine would be able to automatically detect these things and try to adjust itself without inconveniencing the user. All this is to achieve one objective, that is less user intervention and more unattended scanning,” says Abe.

With these enhancements, Fujitsu continues to innovate its products by offering the best in value and performance for its document scanners.

Fujitsu, as a group, is also committed to spending US\$2.6 billion (US\$1 = RM3.80) in its research and development efforts and Abe adds that it is continually developing its technology for the scanner and printer market to maintain its market leader position.

“Some machines may not be introduced in Malaysia but we are committed to introducing 16 new

products in terms of scanners within three years,” says Abe.

He adds that in the dot matrix printer arena, Fujitsu is constantly trying to improve the technologies deployed in this segment with it being a mature market and all.

Some of the technologies would again focus on reducing human intervention in the machines and also improve its quality such as improvements in the life of the print head quality and so on.

In the digital imaging market, Abe says that double-digit growth rates are expected, especially in markets such as the Philippines due to banking requirements. The rate could be pushed further due to the decrease in pricing, making scanners more affordable.

DATA PROTECTION

As businesses place added emphasis on protecting critical data, document-imaging devices are also gaining prominence in the market place. As such Fujitsu is of the opinion that the market is responding very positively to this.

However, it feels that organisations (especially local ones) in Asia (including in Malaysia), do realise the importance of data protection but just have not gone about to actually doing it.

Chan says: “If information just exists on paper only, what would happen if the paper is lost or destroyed. It is easier when the document is scanned and multiple back-ups can be made. Scanning as an input device definitely aids data protection.”

Abe adds that there needs to be more push factors in that direction but claims that they (local companies) are more willing to listen to this now than before.

“More education is necessary in this area as the level of awareness is still low. A lot of companies still do not know all the options available to them.”

As a market leader in the document management industry, Fujitsu would continue to educate the market by organising more events and activities to increase the level of awareness for document protection.

For example, Fujitsu has carried out document management reseller events where it had invited experts to talk about regulatory compliance issues in the United States and also locally on how this was very relevant to companies.

