

In the last Jetrader I spoke at length about the importance of the technical records associated with each of your aircraft. I explained that keeping these records in good order is crucial to ensuring swift asset transfer at handover time and avoiding sizeable costs incurred by unnecessary delays. I recounted horror stories of entire record stores being destroyed, costing several million dollars to replace and of dissatisfied employees holding records to ransom until their issues are resolved.

This edition, I want to detail the technological advances in records scanning that can help protect you if the worst happens but can also, much more significantly, ensure that the day-to-day maintenance, operation and profitability of your asset continues uninterrupted, from each lease to the next.

The majority of lessors already experiment with scanning records to some extent. In the event of a technical query arising at any point of an aircraft's lease, it is common for the lessor to scan the relevant documents and email them to the interested party, resolving the query. A common example would be an engineer scanning, or photocopying, and collating the most pertinent documents during the asset management schedule of the aircraft. In this way, the necessary few documents are easily accessible across the globe, fulfilling ad-hoc requirements as and when they occur.

However, back to birth scanning of technical records is much rarer, with most lessors dismissing the process as time-consuming with limited rewards. Electronic copies of entire aircraft histories can obviously provide a secure back-up if the worst were to happen to the physical documents, however the seemingly low probability of a records disaster renders the whole process ineffective and inefficient, both in terms of time and money.

The most rudimentary form of scanning is that touched upon above, where each individual document is scanned and the aircraft's entire history is stored on a disk, acting as an electronic back-up if documents were to go missing or be irreparably damaged. This method has proved popular, and is a simple and effective way of ensuring your documents are protected, however there are pitfalls and disadvantages to be aware of.

Firstly, if the scanning process – which is actually much more complex than most imagine – is not completed properly by skilled individuals, the quality of the documents can be affected to the point of illegibility, rendering them useless. Secondly, if your scanning is outsourced to individuals untrained in the intricacies and importance of aircraft documentation, there is a very real risk that your stores of physical documents will be damaged or returned to you in disarray, with papers thrown back together regardless of category, date or, in extreme cases, even regardless of aircraft.

But the real disadvantage of simple, back to birth scanning of this kind is in its inaccessibility. At a conservative estimate, a narrowbody aircraft generates approximately 5,000 documents per year of operation, so scanning the entire aircraft history of a 15-year old B737 would result in around 75,000 documents being stored to a disk. With only the most basic indexing, or none whatsoever, and no search facility this represents an engineer's nightmare, where searching for that particular AD that will prove compliance could require days or even weeks of painstakingly clicking through thousands of documents.

This of course would prove most problematic at handover time where searching for required documentation amongst 75,000 on-screen records, or by physically

searching through the hundreds of dusty boxes packed into your warehouse, could delay the start of your asset's new lease. The substantial initial costs of having several trained eyes searching for the documents could be dwarfed by the eventual costs of delays in handover.

It was with these issues in mind that I started up Waviatech, with a vision to address these problems and enable technical staff to use back to birth scanning to obviously protect the asset's documents, but also to facilitate smoother and faster transitions and to actually increase the marketability of the aircraft.

We have created a tool called Stream to enable instant, user-friendly, searchable, indexed and flexible access to aircraft technical records from anywhere across the globe. We provide an end-to-end service where our teams of aircraft records specialists will travel to any worldwide location, will scan the documents to an extremely high quality and will restore the documents to the order and condition they were found in. With their years of aircraft records experience, little or no supervision of our professionals is required, there is minimal or no disruption to the aircraft's current operator and our clients receive daily updates on the progress of the project.

Once the documentation has been captured electronically, it is indexed using industry-standard terminology, and is then made fully text-searchable using powerful Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software. The results are then handed to you on a disk, which works in any PC with no software download required, or access to the records can be gained through our secure online portal thus allowing you to distribute login information to anyone interested in the records.

We are also able to import records stored in CD (such as previously scanned records in bulky PDF format) or microfilm format to Stream, and have successfully converted over 20 aircraft from these formats into single, fully searchable disks that can be copied and distributed to all relevant parties.

Stream's user-friendly disks and online access make it possible for aircraft to be marketed well in advance of the lease end and to multiple parties across the globe simultaneously, with no interruption to current aircraft operations. Also, any issues of concern can be identified and addressed early on, minimising any delays to handover.

It is this custom design that we believe is Stream's core strength. Stream is designed for aviation people, by aviation people. We recognise that aircraft records need to be accessible not only for the engineers that ensure an aircraft's airworthiness, but also for potential lessees or buyers who wish to satisfy themselves as to the maintenance history of the aircraft. For leasing company staff tasked with delivering aircraft to new operators or indeed for any party with a vested interest in the maintenance history of the aircraft.

In conclusion, the only true way to protect the value of the historical records is to scan each and every page, a crude but effective way to protect the asset in unforeseen circumstances. In practice this is rare, with most owners scanning or photocopying selected documents at annual intervals.

Specialised services such as those provided by our company enable a fast and effective way of scanning back to birth records whilst at the same time our trained staff gain an in-depth understanding of their content without interruption to current operator. Furthermore, this large volume of scanned material can now be accessed and utilised by anybody wishing to have their questions answered by using the Stream tool – from anywhere in the world.



ISTAT member Karl Scanlon, Waviatech's Director of Products and Services, talks to JETRADER about the importance of historical records management.

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## Quick Guide to the Latest Portable Document Scanners

We recommend the extremely light and highly rated new range of document scanners from Canon and Fujitsu. These provide a great balance of size and performance and can even be checked in at the airport (provided you have a suitable protective case!). The technology is getting better and better, all leading to significant time savings for your technical staff whilst on location at your lessee.

Canon [www.canon.com](http://www.canon.com)

Model DR3080CII  
Cost \$3,100

Model DR5010C  
Cost \$4,200

Fujitsu [www.fujitsu.com](http://www.fujitsu.com)

Model Fi-5120C  
Cost \$1,200

Model Fi-5530C  
Cost \$4,100