

Digitized County Records

INTRODUCTION

There are thousands of counties in the United States and they play a crucial role in the development of real property in this country. The information stored in county records is the final statement on trillions of dollars in real estate and forms the legal basis for real property ownership as well as centralized recording of taxes, liens and source of fact in legal proceedings. For most of these counties, the information is all in old-fashioned books dating back into the 19th and 18th centuries. It is very inconvenient to trace back titles to land in these old and decaying books. Worse, in the event of a fire, flood or other disaster, these precious original books are subject to catastrophic loss.

Many counties are beginning to record new information in digitized format with databases capable of looking up records by lot numbers, addresses and names. This data only goes back a few years so title searches must still be done the old fashioned way. However, some forward-looking counties are finding the future in the past. They are scanning the historical records so that they are accessible on-line. This provides a tremendous customer convenience and as well as creating a crucial backup and disaster recovery copy for the original and irreplaceable information.

WHY DIGITIZED COUNTY RECORDS

- Customer convenience
- Self-service reduces staff burden

REQUIREMENTS

- High capacity
- High speed
- High reliability
- Disk array with multiple ports

TYPICAL ENVIRONMENTS

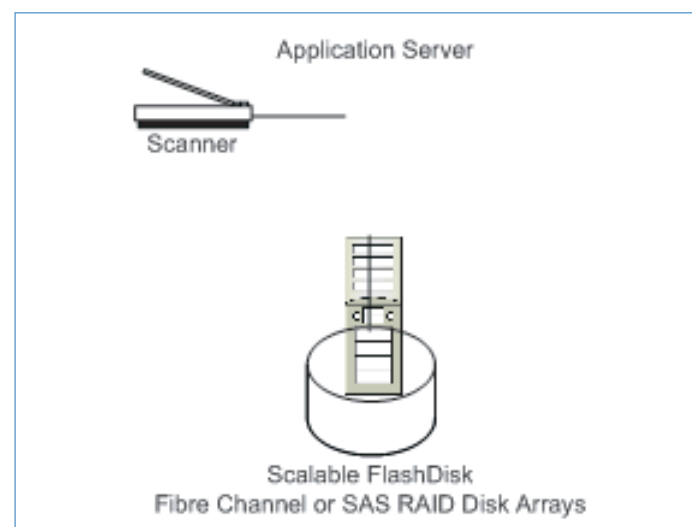
- Local county recorders offices
- Registry of deeds

BENEFITS

- Customer convenience
- Cost savings

HOW IT WORKS

Pages from the county records are digitized into an image with a scanner including maps and plot plans. Each page may have references to multiple properties and must be coded with the county's method of identifying unique properties including the seller, the buyer, the address, parcel number, legal description, entry number, date and other attributes. All the information is recorded into the database for each account for retrieval, sorting, selecting, viewing and printing after account access has been authorized. Once recorded, the data may be accessed hours after a transaction is complete. Some innovative counties have a Tract Index that can track the genealogy of each parcel once the data has been entered.



Maps, plot plans and pages from the country record books are scanned and images are stored with identifying attributes in a database on high performance disk arrays for rapid access. A high performance server and storage can support a county with hundreds of thousands of parcels and several thousand transactions per day.