QAI QUALITY ASSOCIATES INCORPORATED
A KONICA MINOLTA COMPANY

M-19-21 Records Digitization:
How to Evaluate Solution Providers

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Digitization at massive scale is more complicated than just buying a few scanners and having staff push paper through them. If ever there were a task that calls for outsourcing, it is the need to be able to scan and capture documents at scale.

The **Federal Records Management Council (FRMC) white paper on digitization cost benefit analysis**, organized by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), poses 13 key questions that agencies should consider when evaluating potential solution providers and their digitization competency.

In this M-19-21 Industry Insights report, Scott Swidersky of QAI, a leading authority on records management and M-19-21 compliance, shares his insights on these critical questions.

Can the vendor support all stages of the digitization process from initial planning through implementation?	As a leading paper-to-cloud services provider, QAI believes that the process starts with an assessment of content, determination of metadata requirements and a level of effort. Through our *EDGE22*™ proprietary approach, we can complete the digitization process both on-site and offsite. If offsite services are needed, QAI securely transports all content to our facilities. Once records are at the specified conversion location (on-site or off-site), QAI performs document prepping, scanning, indexing, quality control and export to the desired, fully compliant electronic format.
Has the vendor adequately detailed the workflows within its solution?	QAI's *EDGE22* solution has a proven conversion process methodology with standard security practices and procedures to meet all compliance requirements. QAI offers a workflow process that begins right away upon taking custody of the documents from the client. Our *EDGE22*'s stringent security procedures continue throughout the digitization and indexing steps while our end-to-end approach ensures secure delivery of the converted/electronic images, interim storage and final return of the paper documents after the client's acceptance.
What portions of the vendor's solution are outsourced?	With QAI's *EDGE22* solution, QAI employees provide all services.
What security and chain-of-custody controls does the vendor have in place regarding transportation of files and external storage devices?	Comprehensive security standards, policies and procedures govern every dimension of our business, from employees to physical facilities, vehicles and equipment to our internal systems, IT infrastructure and electronic communications. This security-focused approach central to *EDGE22* helps us deliver on our commitment to protect client information as if it were our own.

Does the vendor have a national footprint to service records located across the country?	QAI manages a secure network of imaging centers strategically located across the United States.
What chain-of-custody controls does the vendor implement to protect records throughout the digitization process, starting from pick-up/ handling of physical records through scanning and eventual return to the agency or final disposition?	When taking custody of the materials, QAI staff complete a chain-of-custody (CoC) form which is sent to the client. As the material changes hands throughout the conversion process (prep, scanning, imaging, QC, metadata capture, PDF conversion/ output and finally to re-prep and archiving), QAI staff complete chain of custody sign-off forms to transfer responsibility for the material as it is processed.
Does the vendor offer document preparation, compliant storage, secured transportation and/ or destruction services to appropriately handle the physical-sourced materials?	QAI offers clients a comprehensive, end-to-end source for the digitization process. If working off-site, QAI staff transports the record boxes to and from the client's location via a secure, climate-controlled cargo van that is sealed to prevent any moisture leaks. QAI drivers do not make any additional stops between our facility and the client's locations and will not leave the van (with records in it) unattended at any time. Once in our secure facilities, QAI will complete the digitization process which includes document preparation, scanning, indexing and export into PDF format for delivery. QAI experts perform destruction services which are witnessed at our facilities. At the end of the process, we provide the client with an official certificate of destruction.
How does the vendor track and monitor records as they progress through the digitization process?	QAI utilizes both a barcoded tracking system and sign-off forms for custody and tracking of all client-record boxes. Our experts scan the barcoded box label from intake and through document processing, so that a live location of documents is always maintained. Once the client's documents arrive at our imaging location, we inventory the boxes to confirm the contents. We then verify the records (or record ranges) listed on the client's shipping manifest against the contents of each box. Additionally, we use custody sign-off forms to transfer material responsibility throughout the conversion process.
What steps does the vendor take to ensure accuracy and quality assurance metrics meet the customer's needs?	QAI image quality control (QC) staff perform a 100% quality inspection of each record image at the QC station, which includes the QC staff, a flatbed scanner (for rescans) and access to the original paper documents. The QC staff views each image and inspects it for completeness, cropping, skew and contrast/clarity. QAI recognizes the need for accurate indexing services to search and locate document images from the client's database application. If data entry is utilized as an indexing method, our experts perform data entry and double-blind verification using a validation application, which allows the key entry staff to view the image, scroll and zoom when required in order to key enter in a "side-by-side" mode with the image on the left of the screen and the data entry template on the right side of the screen.
What scanning features/capabilities does the vendor provide (e.g., high resolution, OCR, wide-format document, book scanning, fragile/ historical records)?	QAI has the capability of digitizing all types of content including books, wide format, microfilm and microfiche plus video and audio files. For fragile content, QAI has a proven white-glove methodology and procedures to ensure against material damage or data loss.

Does the vendor provide digitization services for other record formats (e.g., microfilm, microfiche)?	QAI offers digitization services for most record formats including microfilm, microfiche, wide format, video, audio and paper.
What IT compliance requirements or certification does the vendor meet?	QAI has in place comprehensive security standards, policies and procedures that govern every dimension of our business, from employees to physical facilities, vehicles and equipment to our internal systems, IT infrastructure and electronic communications. This security-focused approach helps QAI deliver on our commitment to protect client-based information as if it were our own.

As a division of Konica Business Solutions, U.S.A., Inc., who is ISO Certified, QAI's processes, procedures and reporting requirements follow ISO policies and guidelines. |
| **Can the vendor provide past performance references for successfully completed digitization projects of similar size and scale?** | QAI provides references upon request. Our unwavering commitment to quality is evident in every engagement. We have a remarkable track record of consistently delivering value-driven, compliant solutions on time, every time that has been a major factor in our previous successes at GPO, CMS, FDA, NARA, NIH, DoD, Army, Navy, USPS, DoS, STB, and many other industry and federal, state and local government agencies. |

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about QAI and its records management expertise, visit our **NARA M-19-21 Readiness Center** website (https://www.qualityassociatesinc.com/nara-compliance-readiness/). You can contact us directly at **infoedge22@ quailityassociatesinc.com** or 410-884-9100.

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