



4DigitalBooks™

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i2S revolutionises the Digitisation of the Literary Heritage! *How to digitise 5 million books in 5 years?*

Digitizing Line, the range of high-speed automatic scanners resulting from the Franco-Swiss i2S – 4DigitalBooks (ASSY) consortium, and the launch of Digitizing Line 3000 (3000 pages/hour), provide an answer to the technical issues relating to digitising the heritage.

The Franco-Swiss consortium i2S – 4DigitalBooks (ASSY), world leader in the digitisation market for old books and archives, announces the launch of Digitizing Line 3000. This solution supplements Digitizing Lines 1500 and 1800, which already operate at speeds of 1500 and 1800 pages/hour.

Whether they favour a business orientation or defend a citizen's ambition, Google Print of Google, MSN Book Search of Microsoft, Amazon Pages and Amazon Upgrade of Amazon.com, Open Content Alliance of Yahoo, Gallica of the French National Library or iLibrary 2010 of the Digital European Library are all current American or European digitisation projects that present a challenge at the economic, industrial and technological levels.

While the first two are part of several communications fuelling the debates, the third is completely not accounted for in the current discussions. Surprising, since bulk digitisation henceforth constitutes one of the key elements in creating new business opportunities based on sharing knowledge.

By basing themselves on the know-how that they have acquired when setting up the La Walck digitisation site, the largest European digitisation centre capable of digitising almost 25 million pages/year and by integrating their new ranges of automatic scanners, i2S – 4DigitalBooks (ASSY) and their new Digitizing Line 3000 have provided an answer the essential question: **“How can a production site digitise five million books in five years?”**

The main difficulty in the digitisation of books consists in extracting information while preserving the original. This is all the more true as the book is old. Until 2000, only the human hand was capable of holding a page and turning it without damaging it.

In addition to the high resolution **SUPRASCAN** stations and the latest model, the **CopiBook** desktop scanner (whose revolutionary performance allowed i2S to procure an order for 18 scanners from the Belgian Royal Archives), the i2S and 4DigitalBooks (ASSY) Digitizing Line range provide a technical answer to the economic issues relating to the digitisation of the cultural heritage. The Digitizing Line 3000 operates at a low speed for delicate or fragile books and can attain an unrivalled ultra-fast speed of 3000 pages/hour for books in good condition. This new product is also equipped with another characteristic that is essential for Library Directors: for books that require it, its photographic head is capable of functioning in ambient light, thus ensuring that there is no additional emission of ultraviolet and infrared radiation. The process of turning pages is equipped with several security systems ensuring delicate handling without damaging the book.

The automatic Digitizing Line 3000 scanner therefore ushers in a new era of digitising solutions in complete accord with the current issues of digitisation of the cultural heritage. It provides unrivalled performance and reliability. This new solution allows the largest libraries world over to speed up their projects for digitising books and makes i2S - 4DigitalBooks (ASSY) an essential partner for current and future international projects. All models of scanners offered by i2S – 4DigitalBooks (ASSY) are

compatible with one another, they function on a network and can be directly connected to character recognition (OCR conversion) and indexing systems. In partnership with service companies, the i2S - 4DigitalBooks (ASSY) consortium is therefore capable of providing a set of solutions, constituting genuine "digitising plants".

It remains to be specified which European Business Model would enable the implementation of such digitisation programmes by combining On-line Access, Respect for Copyright royalties and Profitability of an investment of several million euros.

"Beyond the reflections relating to "at what cost?", "at what rate?", i2S now wishes to encourage those involved in digitisation to wonder about the "how?"; in fact, when Google presents a business model and announces the digitisation of 15 million books in 3 years, it seems essential to know what are the technologies that will enable this and what are the terms of operation involved. As a result, the i2S - 4DigitalBooks (ASSY) consortium wishes to raise new questions and bring about another way of looking at the digitisation of the cultural heritage", says Jean-Pierre G erault, founding vice president of the 21st century Gutenberg Association and member of i2S's Board of Directors.

This is because when dealing with issues of digitising knowledge, the technological choices affect the economic as well as the industrial aspects : *"The basic components (cameras, electronic cards and image processing software, human machine interfaces) of all our scanner models, are entirely designed by our engineers. Their constant concern is to take advantage of the latest technologies available in order to optimise each of their functions with the aim of ensuring the best resulting image quality. The more efficient and in fine these steps (quality control, OCR, etc.), the shorter the investment return for the final customer",* remarks Alain Ricros, i2S's Founding President.

"We share the vision of a near future where the majority of books will be reachable online and where full text search would be possible inside their content. This vision has led us to design and develop the Digitizing Line in order to make it possible to extract information contained in pages of books and finally present the vast reservoir of information that has remained intact in libraries", remarks Ivo Iossiger, Founding President of 4DigitalBooks.

This is a new look expressed by the range of Digitizing Line solutions as, apart from technological performance, this new digitisation solution consolidates i2S - 4DigitalBooks (ASSY) in the development of a positioning, as "technology provider" to the project manager, equipment manufacturer as well as the architect.

General characteristics of Digitizing Line 3000:

- Automatic detection and adaptation to the book parameters
- High quality monochrome, grey scale and colour TIFF images
- Exceptional productivity of up to 3000 pages per hour
- Its photographic head is capable of operating in ambient light
- Only one page is turned at a time (no human error or productivity variation) and assured user-friendliness (as easy to use as a photocopy machine)
- Book parameters recording (presets) allowing a fast way to work with similar books
- Handles books of small page format (2xA5), as well as those of very large page format (2xA2).

About i2S

i2S, a pioneer in digital imaging technology, was set up at Bordeaux in February 1979 by two engineers who are still heading the company, Alain Ricros and Jean-Louis Blouin. i2S's head office is based at Pessac in southwest France. The company has a trade office at Paris and two agencies overseas, one at Milford (Connecticut – United States) and the other at Shanghai (Republic of China).

i2S currently has a staff of 56 persons and recorded a turnover of 10 million Euros in 2004 (an increase of 15% compared to 2003). All its clients (Ariane Espace, Thal s, General Electric, Corning, BNF, Library of Congress) are international companies.

i2S is organised into three divisions:

° i2S Vision distributes in France machine vision products and components of reputed manufacturers in the market (Sony, Dalsa, Matrox)

- ° i2S Line Scan designs, manufactures and installs linear vision and surface inspection solutions for continuous running products
- ° i2S DigiBook designs, manufactures and markets a complete range of book scanners and software suites for restoring bound, old and fragile books.

About ASSY

ASSY SA, a Swiss company located at Ecublens near Lausanne was set up in 1998 by Ivo IOSSIGER in the field of Engineering and Automation. ASSY's main abilities are industrial data processing, Mechanics and Electrical Engineering. ASSY has provided numerous industrial clients with custom-made solutions. In the year 2000, ASSY designed and manufactured the automatic turn-page known as Digitizing Line, which has since become its flagship product. Today its 4DigitalBooks brand has become a worldwide leader in the automatic digitisation of books.