

Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) Solves Major Document Management Issues with ABBYY FormReader™

Even at the Initial Stage, the New System Brings Hefty Benefits to the Institute

Introduction

With its Headquarters in New Delhi and 116 branches all over the country, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) is the second largest accounting body in the world. The main activities of ICAI are holding examinations, arranging practical training, member enrollment, regulation & maintenance of status and standard of members' professional qualification, and much more. All these activities produce vast amounts of paperwork. Until recently, member files, examination papers, enrollment applications, regulatory documentation, and so forth, were paper-based only, and the institute had no adequate form and document management system in place. Form processing took weeks, and important documentation was at the risk of being misplaced, or even perished.

The current membership is about 135,000, and over 350,000 students are presently pursuing the Chartered Accountancy course at the ICAI. The urgent need to begin systematizing document management revealed 3 large areas of focus: automating enrollment application processing, creating an electronic member database, and digitizing of archives.

A complex situation

In terms of document management, ICAI faces several problems, all stemming (directly or inversely) from inadequate system currently in place. The major problems are listed below:

1. As the closing date for registration of students for Common Proficiency Test (CPT) was fast approaching, the Institute was receiving nearly 5,000 forms per day from each of the 5 regional centers. Prior to introduction of ABBYY, existing manual processing setup and logistics was at capacity of processing only 200 forms per day at each site. Needless to say, a mounting backlog was a direct result.
2. With 135,000 members in roster, it was becoming difficult to keep track of the member files, all paper-based, and incorporating changes in the data provided by the members. Loss of information and personal files is an ever-present threat.
3. Some of the paper document archive, accumulated since the inception of the ICAI library five decades ago, is on the verge of deteriorating.



About Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI)

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) is a statutory body established under the Chartered Accountants Act, 1949 (Act No. XXXVIII of 1949) for the regulation of the profession of Chartered Accountants in India. It is a premier accounting body not only in the country but also globally, for its contribution in the fields of education, professional development, maintenance of high accounting, auditing and ethical standards. More information is available at <http://www.icai.org>



About NETSPIDER INDIA (NIIL)

NETSPIDER INDIA specializes in ABBYY channel distribution and giving end-to-end solutions in various fields like imaging, networking, scanning, connectivity, Project consultancy, and doing developments around ABBYY technology. NETSPIDER INDIA has experienced technical skills in implementing ABBYY FineReader OCR, FormReader Enterprise, Desktop, FlexiCapture Studio and other ABBYY line of products. More information is available at <http://www.niil.in>

ABBYY-powered solution to take on the challenges

At the initial stages of the project, the issues with Common Proficiency Test (CPT) registration form processing were addressed first. NETSPIDER INDIA (NIIL), an ABBYY Representative in India, rose to the challenge and gave the following guarantees to ICAI:

1. All incoming CPT registration forms to be uploaded in the ICAI website within a day, which meant 25,000, as opposed to 1,000 forms, would be processed daily.
2. Raising processing accuracy from existing 60% to 100%.

To deliver the results as guaranteed, **ABBYY FormReader 6.5** was the designated solution.

Methodology

ABBYY FormReader's capability of effectively covering the entire cycle of form processing is taken advantage of: form design, scanning, recognition, validation, verification and export – are all done in FormReader.

The CPT form was designed with ABBYY FormDesigner and uploaded to ICAI's website to be printed out therefrom. As per the customer's specifications, the form contains fields to be filled out and a placeholder for a candidate's photograph. A filled form, with a photograph pasted onto it, is scanned at the branch office and uploaded into a central FTP server of the head office. From the FTP server, FormReader automatically processes the data in each field respectively, and then, the data is verified on FormReader's verification stations. Once the verification is done, FormReader exports the data to D2K database, and the candidate photos are converted to PDF images and sent to NIIL's Document Imaging and Management Solution by OLE automation interface. The end result: an electronic centralized system, where a student's photo also serves as a hyper-link to the student's file in the database. Accessing application data for ICAI staff is now a matter of a few keystrokes, and prospective students receive acceptance results expeditiously.

Summary

1. Any printer with any setting can be used to print forms designed in ABBYY FormDesigner: a great relief to ICAI in terms of usability.
2. Excellent user acceptance of FormReader among the ICAI staff: the software has proven to be very hassle-free, and it requires a minimum number of people to be involved in the entire process of handling 25,000 forms each day.
3. FormReader's ease-of-use and one day of onsite training by NIIL was sufficient to convert beginners to ICR professionals.

Ongoing Project Support with ABBYY

NETSPIDER INDIA (NIIL) is set to continue providing ABBYY solutions for creating an effective document management system at ICAI:

1. Member records management

- a. **ABBYY FineReader OCR** would be used to process the records of the existing members and uploaded into a database.
- b. About 40 different kinds of forms relating to membership of ICAI would be designed using ABBYY FormDesigner for new members and uploaded to ICAI's website.

2. Digitizing the library documents

- a. **ABBYY FineReader OCR** would be used to process and index library documents to save the data from perishing and enable full text search for quick and easy access.

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