

Drop-feed Scanning Often FASTER than Auto-feed Scanning

By Bob DeWitt

Every once in a while something new comes along that turns conventional wisdom upside down. In 2005, OPEX Corporation began turning the production scanning world upside down with something really different; so different and so counter-intuitive, that even after three years and hundreds of successful installations, many veterans of the industry still don't *get it*. But we're proving every day that drop-feed scanning is FASTER than auto-feed scanning!

If you have been scanning for a while, you are probably skeptical. You might say, "How can hand-feeding possibly be faster than auto-feeding on my shiny new Bimford Mach 5 production scanner? I can scan my entire day's work in minutes." I'm here to tell you it doesn't matter: OPEX drop-feed scanning is faster.

So what is our secret? Our drop-feed scanners reduce prep, and scan the work, all in one step!

OPEX drop-feed scanning is faster than auto-feed scanning when *you count prep time* !

Honestly...we'll prove it. If you are prepping at 800 items/hr, and scanning at 1,000,000 items/hr, what is your scanning speed? If you could prep AND scan at 1600 items/hr in one step, would you be scanning faster or slower? If your answer is faster, then you understand the speed benefits of drop-feed scanning. It's about the total labor, not the scanning speed, because your overall productivity is linked to the slowest step in your process.



Even if you're with me so far, you might still ask, "But how can drop-fed scanning be faster than prep alone?" The simple answer is that prepping for an auto-feeder requires much more work than simply dropping items on an OPEX drop-feeder.

Drop-scanning on one of our feature rich scanners virtually eliminates time consuming operations like:

- Carefully aligning edges
- Jogging
- Mounting small items
- Photocopying fragile items
- Separating carbons
- Taping damaged items
- Adding separator sheets

- Separating checks from collateral
- Making multiple batches
- Numbering items
- Transporting between prep and scan operations
- ...and more!

Every application is different so the benefits will vary considerably, but if each item is being touched by someone during prep today, drop-fed scanning will almost always increase your process speed.

If you'd like to estimate the potential speed of one step drop-scanning in your application, perform this simple test: Drop items as fast as you like on a single sloppy pile, one piece at a time, but without doing any of the tasks listed above and measure the time it takes to do a batch. Then, compare that to the time it would take you to prep and scan the same batch in the traditional manner. We're confident the difference will be eye opening.

And speed isn't even the best part of one step drop-scanning. Quality and process control will improve, sometimes dramatically. Auto-feed errors are eliminated, transaction boundaries are maintained better, images can be reviewed easier, fewer people are touching sensitive documents, and re-scans can happen on the spot. For many applications these benefits alone far outweigh the labor savings associated with a faster process.

In fairness, drop-scanning doesn't always win. If your work is uniform, auto-feeds well, and doesn't need to be reviewed one piece at a time during prep, auto-feed scanning will probably make the most sense for you.

But if not, why not look at a better way, something really different: A drop-feed scanner from OPEX?

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