Market Roundup

October 12, 2007

ABBYY Launches Document Structure-Aware OCR

By Clay Ryder

ABBYY, a document recognition, data capture, and linguistic technology vendor, has announced ABBYY FineReader version 9.0, the first OCR product that can automatically deliver editable files with native document formatting. According to the company, this latest version offers up to a 35% improvement in accuracy, particularly with documents containing tables and images. FineReader 9.0 combines enhanced accuracy in the reproduction of document layouts with new tools, extended document format support, and an interface redesign that seeks to provide increased user productivity. FineReader recognizes the logical structure of a document across multiple pages and can determine how certain formatting elements should be treated when sending to Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel. As a result, the headers and footers, page numbering, footnotes, fonts, and styles of the original are retained while footnotes and their corresponding text, image captions, graphics and tables are automatically grouped with the appropriate object type. In addition, the new version also recognizes and retains a variety of other formatting elements such as line numbering, signatures, and stamps found in legal and other documents. FineReader 9.0 is Microsoft Windows Vista-certified, supports Windows XP 64 Bit Edition, and is compatible with Microsoft Office 2007. The software also supports input of images in XPS (XML Paper Specification) as well as output of documents in the PDF/A format. ABBYY FineReader 9.0 is available in three editions: FineReader Professional Edition is designed for individual desktop use; FineReader Corporate Edition is for SMBs or workgroups, offers concurrent licensing, and includes direct support for distributed document processing through shared dictionaries and monitored "Hot Folders" that enable scheduled OCR processing; and FineReader Site License Edition is for enterprises with large volumes of users and installation via automated roll-out.

OCR is not new by any stretch of the imagination; however, despite its marketplace longevity, one of the most daunting tasks is not capturing a photographic copy of a document, nor discovering the text within, but rather maintaining the context/fidelity of the document form. In even the most simple business document, there are often several areas of the form with specific meaning, e.g., date, invoice number, header, footer, footnote, to name just a few. When recognized as simply a series of characters, as with many OCR solutions, this requires considerable manual interpretation of the information in order for the document to make sense. Considering the multitudes of paper documents such as invoices, purchase orders, contracts, etc. that can benefit from OCR, the need for more intelligence in the OCR process becomes clear.

With this latest release of FineReader, we see this OCR challenge being addressed head-on. One of the differentiating features of this offering is the ability to recognize, via a template, the various fields of a document and use this information help translate the document into a datastore such as a database. This ability should help organizations reduce the time necessary to import paper documents successfully into various document management schemes while maintaining much of the document context as well as the characters on the page. While the potential in common office tasks such as accounts receivable and payable may represent low-hanging fruit, for organizations that want to avail themselves of detailed searching of documents, perhaps in a legal

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scenario, or simply wish to take printed documents of which there is no electronic copy and bring the information into an electronic form, the ability to capture the context of a document is almost as important as the content itself, and this has remained one of the challenges most have faced with attempting to bridge the paper and electronic worlds.

While a copy of FineReader alone will not solve the totality of the paper and electronic integration challenges many organizations face, its latest capability should prove interesting to ABBYY's many partners and OEM licensees. It is from these industry partners that we would expect to see enhanced offerings, perhaps even ones that would be applicable to the SMB market segment, that would focus on automated translation of commonly received business documents into databases and help SMBs streamline their paper handling as part of their larger information management processes. The ecosystem of potential OCR partners is rich and ABBYY has already established relations with many. Perhaps with this latest technical achievement, we will see additional partner-driven offerings that raise the value proposition of OCR beyond simple recognition to content and context recognition whereby business process can become an additional part of the document-handling activity.

Blue Coat Appliance Beefs Up Anti-Phishing Technology

By Lawrence D. Dietz

Blue Coat Systems, Inc. has announced that its Blue Coat WebFilter for Blue Coat ProxySG appliances now features Real-Time Anti-Phishing protection. This capability can block access to phishing Web sites or warn users that they are attempting to open a phishing Web page that could expose them to potential fraud or theft. Rather than depending solely on a database, the Blue Coat Real-Time Anti-Phishing protection technology assesses a Website on the fly and examines it based on proprietary algorithms. This process can also be performed on sites using SSL-encryption.

Blue Coat Real-Time Anti-Phishing protection technology is the latest addition to the Dynamic Real-Time Rating service of the Blue Coat WebFilter product. URLs for brand new or previously undiscovered Websites can be assessed in real time and categorized as pornography, gambling, spyware sources, or some other possibly dangerous or inappropriate code. In addition, Blue Coat ProxySG appliances can automatically check for credential discrepancies of secure Web sites that could indicate a rogue site. Blue Coat WebFilter runs on Blue Coat ProxySG appliances. While WebFilter utilizes an on-proxy database of over 15 million Website ratings representing billions of Web pages of real Internet usage, the product also uses DRTR to access and categorize new or previously undiscovered Web sites.

Today's attacks are overwhelmingly money-motivated and their actions are based on a business model wherein cyber crooks need only a small number of hits to the counterfeit sites. Each hit can provide personally identifiable information that can either be monetized by selling to others or can be used by the original perpetrators for identity fraud or other criminal purposes. The sophistication of the counterfeit sites to which victims are directed is growing daily and it is extremely difficult for individuals to quickly determine whether a site is real or not. We believe that static, reactive database-architected products are not up to the task. We also believe that the cyber crooks will vary their "MO" to adapt to defenses as they are implemented; consequently centralized management is another necessary prerequisite to success and Blue Coat's approach is in line with our assessment.

The appliance form factor has long been favored by software administrators and IT Managers as the most efficient means of implementing functionality across a number of locations. Appliances do not require local maintenance or support and are managed centrally, and are consequently a natural form factor for dealing with a dynamic and evolving threat such as phishing. Phishing sites are generally short-lived, and with hundreds of new ones appearing each day, simply evaluating a requested page against a database is generally ineffective, and the Blue Coat approach is one to consider. History has shown that the attackers adapt quickly to new defensive technology. We will continue to assess the effectiveness of this architecture, but caution end-user organizations that the weak link will continue to be the untrained, uncaring, and unaware individual who falls prey to even the most primitive of schemes, and if you're looking to make some money in guaranteed Nigerian oil dealings, let us know.

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Fujitsu Siemens Introduces New FibreCAT Storage for SMBs

By Clay Ryder

Fujitsu Siemens Computers has announced two new models in its FibreCAT family, the new FibreCAT SX88 disk storage device and the FibreCAT TX08 based upon automatic LTO tape storage. The FibreCAT SX88 is up to 50% faster than the previous FibreCAT SX80 models due to optimized RAID controllers and support for 4GBps fibre-channel connections throughout the system. All key components such as RAID controllers, fans, power supply, and hard disks are hot-swappable redundant. Customers can choose SATA-II or SAS disks or a combination of the two in a single enclosure with scalability up to 42TB. The solution targets applications such as databases, backup-to-disk, streaming media, email, Web services, and archiving, among others. As with other FibreCAT SX models, the SX88 features FibreCap technology, which protects the contents of the RAID controller cache from data loss in the event of a power failure. FibreCache also helps ensure that the cache contents of the RAID controllers always remain in sync via a quick direct connection and that controller performance is exploited efficiently. The new FibreCAT TX08 offers SMBs an entry point into automated tape storage based upon LTO technology. The tape system has two magazines and four slots, can be equipped with either an LTO-2 or LTO-3 drive to provide up to 6.4TB of capacity (compressed), and can perform automated daily data backup for eight days. In addition, the TX08 includes a built-in barcode reader facilitating media management, and a full version of the BrightStor ARCserve backup software at no additional charge. The FibreCAT SX88 is available from October 1 with prices starting at €8400, while the FibreCAT TX08 will be available from November 1, priced at €3700.

Midsized businesses from an opportunity perspective are big business, especially in geographies such as EMEA where some of the largest firms would still qualify as midsized by a North American segmentation perspective. To succeed in this market, it is essential that vendors offer properly scaled solutions that address not only the technological needs of SMBs, but also their IT skill set, IT scale, and financial reality. Even though such midrange and smaller organizations are increasingly subject to all of the same IT risks and rewards as their larger counterparts, they generally lack specialized storage staff or expertise to create a best of breed solutions in-house. Their needs are straightforward: Give an SMB something that works out of the box, has sufficient integrated features, a reasonable toolkit, and financing that is affordable.

To this end, we are pleased to see FSC's continued focus on creating appropriately scaled solutions that target the SMB without diluting the value proposition of the solution. As user expectations of IT rise, the storage demands of the SMB market will continue to grow, and as regulations increase, the timely storage and retrieval of data only continues to rise in importance. Easy-to-use platforms will be part of the solution, but support for state-of-the-art technology, e.g., SATA drives, LTO tape, automation, etc. will also be an essential part of SMB-focused wares. With this announcement, FSC continues to improve on its competitive position for entry- and mid-level storage solutions while delivering new technology in fresh solutions at attractive price points. From an SMB user perspective, this will likely be a welcome addition into the marketplace.

Motorola S/MIME Mobile Email Aims for Government Target

By Lawrence D. Dietz

Motorola, Inc. has introduced Good Mobile Messaging Secure Multipurpose Internet Mail Extensions (Good S/MIME). Designed specifically to meet federal government security policy requirements, Good S/MIME supports the Motorola Q family of smartphones and gives the Department of Defense and associated government agencies a mobile messaging solution that is more personalized and easier to manage and administer than other alternatives. While DoD agencies such as the Navy, Army, Marine Corps, and Air Force are highly mobile and dependent upon secure, anywhere/anytime access to data to do their jobs, their mobile email options have been limited. With stringent security requirements such as the Homeland Security Presidential Directive, which requires the use of Public Key Infrastructure, and DoD Directive 8100.2, which mandates the use of a common access card (CAC) to access mobile devices and information, few mobile messaging systems meet the federal government's advanced security requirements. Good S/MIME is compliant with the mandated standards for public key encryption and signing of email, and with approval from The Defense Information Security Agency has developed a software technical implementation guide to enable DoD agencies to begin deploying Good S/MIME immediately.

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Good S/MIME works with the Motorola Q family of smartphones, Bluetooth CAC-readers, and standard DoD-issued common access cards to secure CAC communication, and to sign and encrypt emails and attachments. The user interface includes automatic signing and encrypting of attachments, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and PDF documents and pictures; CAC pairing to smartphones; and automatic over-the-air synchronization of certificates for cable-free access to all certificates, including Personal Contacts as well as those stored in the corporate directory. Good S/MIME includes all of the features of the recently introduced Good Mobile Messaging 5 software and service, and pairs with the MOTO Q family of devices to give DoD users a mobile RSS reader and subscription manager, the ability to group and sort emails by conversation threads, the ability to customize priority mail with personalized notifications, and calendaring capabilities, including realtime free-busy visibility and conference room look-up. In addition, Good S/MIME gives IT managers advanced security and management capabilities including a Web-based monitoring portal for realtime handheld fleet visibility, a mandatory application checker, application blacklisting, WiFi, Bluetooth, SD-card and camera lock-down, and SD-card and database encryption, all through a single management console with over-the-air controls.

When the U.S. Government speaks with its purchasing power, vendors and other large end-user organizations ought to listen. We have published several pieces this year indicating the importance of safeguarding data by its value rather than by its location. We have also emphasized the notion of increased mobility, especially within large end-user organizations, and while we readily concede that the rigor of security enforcement within the Department of Defense is greater than in most organizations, DoD's broad acceptance of the common access card and its ubiquity within that gargantuan department ought to make people stand up and take notice.

Motorola with its long history of secure voice systems for government organizations at all levels and its recent pushes in the area of first responders is positioned to grab an early lead in the secure mobile communication market. End-user reliance on BlackBerries and similar devices is on the upswing and unlike past technology trends in the military includes the top brass. Reliance on email and PowerPoint in particular are core to many government and especially military operations. Advanced security features such as disabling camera capabilities is another benefit welcomed by government security officials and we believe Motorola's example is one other vendors and large end-user organizations with sensitive communications to mobile employees ought to look at.

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