

Case Study



The Electoral Board (Junta Central Electoral) Streamlines Election Results Computing in Dominican Republic with Fujitsu Scanners

While regions such as the United States have experienced decades of consistent growth in their use of electronic voting equipment, the most widely used voting method is still the paper ballot. In fact, paper ballots are often used for backup and a paper trail is leveraged for auditing purposes. So even as polling stations get digitized, the paper factor still remains.

Business Needs

The organizations that are responsible for collecting and computing election results are constantly operating in a paper-intensive environment, in which processing speed and accuracy of results is critical. Proper documentation is the cornerstone of not only the organization's successful business operation, but of an accurate election outcome for the region.

Located in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, and founded in 1923, the Central Electoral Board (JCE) is the Dominican Republic government's highest ranked electoral board. Among its responsibilities of issuing regulations to ensure free and honest elections, directing the distribution of ballots, equipment and voting materials, and supervising the functioning of the lower-level electoral boards, one of its primary functions is to administer and process election results.

Since inception, the JCE has processed election results manually. But with total votes cast in the Dominican Republic reaching roughly 4 million in the presidential election in 2008 and 3 million in the parliamentary election in 2006, it was taking their information technology (IT) department up to 12 hours to process all votes from a given election.

“Our system for computing election results consisted of receiving the original documents, manually inputting the information from the original documents into a computer system and validating the information by cross-checking each entry with the original documents,” said Franklin R. Frias, IT Director, JCE.

Solution

Once the JCE decided to reevaluate their cumbersome manual process for computing election results, they explored different solutions for electronic document management systems. The JCE narrowed in on Fujitsu's line of flexible and high-performance scanners. Today, 416 scanners from Fujitsu's line of Workgroup, Departmental and Production scanners have been deployed across the electoral divisions in all of 154 cities.

With their superior paper handling, advanced scanning features and ease of integration, the family of scanners has allowed the JCE to process and file election results digitally and in real-time, with superior quality and limited support. With the Fujitsu scanners, the JCE simply scans the physical results, which are then automatically digitized and recognized by Intelligent Character Recognition (ICR) and Optical Mark Recognition (OMR). Then, the results are quickly processed and inserted in an application for further data entry and validation. From there, the reports are generated and approved, and then serve as the official election results. Since deployment, the scanners have been used for other applications as well, including digitizing and organizing office documents such as internal and external department communications memos.

Benefits

By alleviating the need to manually input, calculate and cross-check results with the physical documents, the JCE quickly saw an increase in speed of document conversion and productivity as well as reduction in both time to process information and personnel required to process documents. Additionally, the institution benefits from having a digital copy of the original documents.

The JCE's primary motivation for digitizing the election results computing system was to increase the speed of presenting the election results and to digitize and better manage the critical documents that support the elections. After implementing Fujitsu's Workgroup, Departmental and Production scanners, the processing time was reduced from 12 hours to just three hours. The significant increase in processing speed from the Fujitsu scanners has made for a more efficient and cost-effective computing process and has been one of the most important returns on investment for both the JCE and the Dominican Republic government at large.

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