



Enterprise

Scanshare Enterprise

Features & Productivity

Usability

IT Admin & Security

Support & Training

Value

OVERVIEW

Scanshare Enterprise is a data capture and routing solution aimed at organizations that need to capture, convert, and route paper and electronic documents. The solution is designed to let users control print and scan workflows via an MFP's control panel, but it can also be used via desktop clients to incorporate electronic documents from a user's PC. Scanshare Enterprise processes paper and electronic documents, such as scans or files stored in a network folder, and can route them to a variety of destinations after passing them through any number of transformations including full-page and zonal OCR and OMR (optical mark recognition), image enhancement, PDF conversion, and XML exporting, if desired. Workflows can be set up to annotate input in all manner of ways. For organizations that need fewer capabilities, a more streamlined version, Scanshare Essentials, is also available.

Product Snapshot

Product: Scanshare Enterprise

Version: 4.7.0

Software Developer: Scanshare Applications B.V.

Web: www.scanshare.com

Phone: +31 40 302 0002

For more information on Scanshare products, see Buyers Lab's comprehensive coverage at Buyerslab.com/Solutions.

About Buyers Lab: Since 1961, Buyers Lab has been a leading test laboratory in the world of digital imaging equipment. Buyers Lab is completely independent in all of its testing processes and subsequent reporting. All of Buyers Lab's product evaluations are conducted by highly experienced employees in its on-site testing facilities in the United Kingdom and United States where hundreds of new copiers, printers, wide-format devices, scanners, faxes and multi-function (MFP) products are evaluated and reported on each year.

STRENGTHS

- Ability to set up a variety of workflows and control visibility by user or user group
- Control panel integration provides quick user access to workflow templates to capture and route scanned documents directly from multiple MFP brands
- Printer driver client allows users to redirect documents through workflows using File > Print functionality from any Windows desktop application
- Supports a wide range of third-party connectors such as document management repositories and fax servers
- Allows multiple transform options and multiple output destinations in a single workflow
- Outputs directly to Microsoft SharePoint, Google Drive, and email
- Encrypted PDF, user authentication, and support for SSL all help to secure routed information
- Administrative control over workflows, device settings, and user access
- ‘Dashboard’ view, email alerts, and an error log help inform administrators of problems

WEAKNESSES

- PC, Professional, and Printer driver clients must be installed on each user’s machine; there is no facility to run the PC client utilities in a browser
- The standard activity logs lack detailed job log features such as detailed job history reports or the ability to export information to a CSV file

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Features & Productivity

Scanshare Enterprise has a wealth of standard and optional features that meet the needs of a modern organization, such as the ability to scan to cloud destinations, recognize and deal with individual documents, and capture data via OCR, OMR, and zonal OCR. Most notably, it has an advanced workflow engine for specifying how captured documents will be treated.

SCAN CAPTURE	DATA CAPTURE	OCR/ZONAL OCR
BARCODE RECOGNITION	OPTICAL MARK RECOGNITION	OPTICAL MAGNETIC INK RECOGNITION
REDACTION	IMAGE PROCESSING	DOCUMENT ROUTING
ADVANCED WORKFLOWS		

- Scanshare Enterprise supports full-text and zonal OCR/OMR for converting static documents into searchable, editable formats. The Nuance OmniPage OCR engine is included with Scanshare Enterprise as standard, while the ABBYY OCR engine is available as an option. The Nuance engine can detect 39 languages, while the optional ABBYY OCR engine can detect 63 languages, with a further option to extend that number to 75.
- The ABBYY OCR engine allows output to ODT (Open Office) file types, and the Enhance Local Contrast, Remove Noise, Keep Pictures, and Keep Text Colour options are only available with the ABBYY OCR server.
- The exact input sources and/or clients available for document input depend on an organization’s subscription, but those available include PC clients, the Scanshare Enterprise printer client (so users can send a document to the system via the print dialog of just about any Windows program), the Android app, email, FTP, watched folders, Plustek scanners, and various MFP brands. The MFP capture applet is available for Olivetti & Konica Minolta (bEST, OpenAPI and iOption), KYOCERA (HyPAS), Lexmark (LES), OKI (EWB, sXP), Ricoh (ESA), Samsung (XOA, XOA-Web and SmartUX), Sharp (OSA), Toshiba (EWB), and Xerox (EIP) MFPs.
- In custom workflows, the user interfaces of the capture clients can be configured to pose questions to the user. These questions take input from the user so that the workflow can be completed in the most appropriate fashion. Questions can be used to let users dictate job options, such as setting the resolution, colour, and size of a scan job, for example.
- In the processing step, a wide range of actions can be set to be taken automatically on a document. The tools available include Annotation, Barcode Reader, Barcode Writer, Data Export, Image Processing, OMR, and Zone OCR.
- The Image Processing tool allows a number of image processing operations to be performed on an input document. Such operations include anti-aliasing, adjustable colour bit depth, a blank page detector, and hole punch removal, among many others (see list below). All of the different image processing features allow the user to define the level or intensity of the effect.

CONTENTS ▶

[Features/Productivity](#)

[Usability](#)

[IT Admin/Security](#)

[Support/Training](#)

[Value](#)

- Scanshare Enterprise’s Free Form feature allows individual documents in an unsorted batch to be routed automatically to the correct workflow, which will save a lot of time for mailroom or office staff tasked with inputting documents into the system. (Currently, only the Nuance OCR engine can be used with the Free Form feature.)

SOFTWARE INTEGRATION

- Scanshare Enterprise can integrate with an organization’s Active Directory and LDAP servers in order to provide users with Single Sign On access so that they can log into MFPs using their Windows username and password.
- There are many connectors that can be used with Scanshare Enterprise, including Windows File System, Microsoft Sharepoint, Xero, DocuWare, Dokoni, Dropbox, Evernote, Google Drive, LEAP, InfinityLaw, Citrix Sharefile, Synergy Enterprise, and Dokmee, among many others.
- Scanshare Enterprise is compatible with the embedded software systems of Olivetti & Konica Minolta (bEST, OpenAPI and iOption) KYOCERA (HyPAS), Lexmark (LES), OKI (EWB, sXP), Plustek, Ricoh (ESA), Samsung (XOA, XOA-Web and SmartUX), Sharp (OSA), Toshiba (EWB), and Xerox (EIP) MFPs; client software can be embedded in them.

List of Connectors

Scanshare Enterprise can route processed scans to multiple destinations, including server applications, cloud storage services, email, and FTP. The exact connectors available to an organization depend on the licence it has purchased. Connectors other than those in this list may be available.

- | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Afas Online | • Google Drive | • Records Manager |
| • Affinity | • Itec iFax | • Scanshare Enterprise Repository |
| • Amazon AWS | • InfinityLaw | • Script |
| • Citrix ShareFile | • Infotraq | • Sentral |
| • Database | • Leap | • SharePoint |
| • Docuware | • M-Files | • Synergy Enterprise |
| • Dokmee | • MediaFire | • TRIM |
| • Dokoni | • OneDrive | • WebDAV |
| • Dropbox | • OneDrive for Business | • Windream |
| • Dynamics NAV | • OpenText Content Server | • Windows File System |
| • ELO | • Orbeon | • Worksite |
| • Email | • Practice Evolve | • Xero |
| • Evernote | • Print | • XPLAN |
| • FTP | • Raet YouForce | |

VERTICAL MARKET SUITABILITY

- Although Scanshare Enterprise is ostensibly a general-purpose application, its very nature makes it eminently suited to vertical markets where accurate data extraction, document capture, and document security are prized. Such vertical markets include the legal, medical, and education sectors.
- The ability to process documents with magnetic ink character recognition makes Scanshare Enterprise suited to banking.



- PC Client, PC Client Professional, and Printer Client must be installed separately on users' PCs. Installation is a wizard-driven process.
- Administrators must enter the IP address of the Scanshare Enterprise server in the PC Client utilities before users can access them.

ONGOING ADMINISTRATION

- Scanshare Enterprise is a fairly straightforward solution to administer. Many settings can be accessed from one dialog box, which is well organized in categories. From here, users can set up connections to MFPs and enable single sign-on for them, change the amount of data that is written to the logs, and configure the email server to use, among other things.
- The dashboard provides administrators with graphical and textual descriptions of the current processor and memory loads, the currently running services, and a list of system events.
- With the exception of the workflow designer, most of the controls in Scanshare Enterprise are buttons, text fields, and switches. Menus are often to be found to the left of the screen, and dialog boxes are used to perform specific functions such as configuring workflow tools. All of this means that Scanshare Enterprise's look and feel is intuitive to anyone with a basic understanding of how to interact with software.
- Scanshare Enterprise makes good use of graphics where necessary, an example being the Dashboard view, where users can see easy-to-understand representations of the server's CPU and RAM load. The Dashboard also shows the number of items such as workflows or clients as circles, with the size of the circles denoting the frequency of some parameter, such as workflows performed or clients used. This is a neat way of seeing the most frequently used workflows, clients, and so on at a glance.
- Administrators can also view logs at the Dashboard, and even these use colour to distinguish between different types of events.
- Where dialog boxes are used, they can conveniently be moved around the screen so that they don't obscure other onscreen elements to which the administrator might need to refer. It'd be good if the dialog boxes could be resized, too.
- Scanshare Enterprise makes good use of icons where space is at a premium, such as the spanner or Connect To icons in the workflow designer. It also uses special icons for each tool so that they can be easily recognized at a glance when working on a workflow.
- Administrators must explicitly save or cancel changes, which means that it's difficult to alter a setting accidentally. They are not prompted to save workflows, and this would be a worthy feature to add.
- There are some things that could be improved. One example is the pop-up trigger menu that is displayed when a user places the mouse cursor over the connection line between tools. When a user is trying to click the line they can accidentally click the pop-up menu or one of its options instead, and this can be repeated a few times, much to the annoyance of the user. It can also be tricky to select an item from the pop-up menu when a user does need it, as it frequently disappears before the user can press an item on it. One solution would be to force a user to close it rather than having it appear and disappear based on the position of the mouse cursor.

CONTENTS ►

[Features/Productivity](#)

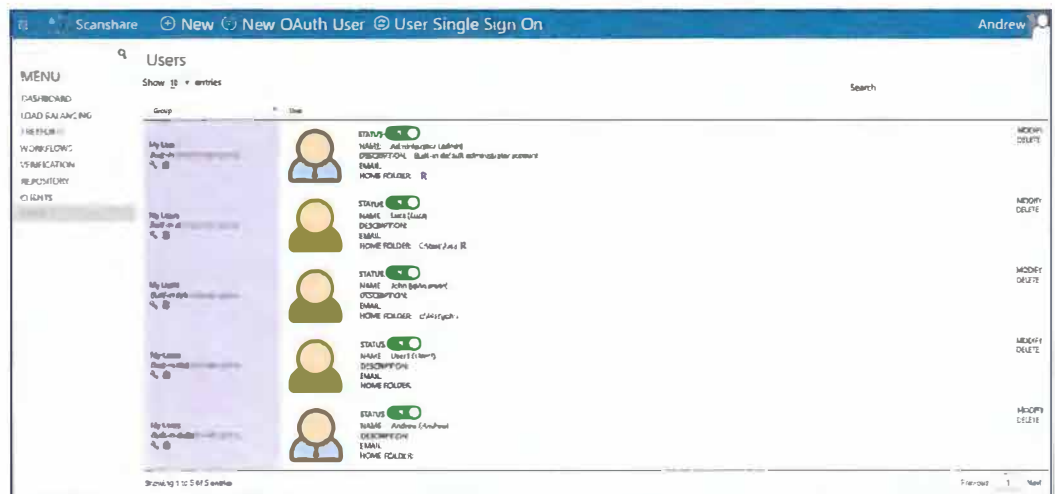
[Usability](#)

[IT Admin/Security](#)

[Support/Training](#)

[Value](#)

- Administrators can choose between two types of clustering: managing and processing. Scanshare Enterprise displays a map of the servers, which helps administrators to visualize the relationships between them and also to access settings and configuration screens for each server.
- The Processing cluster option uses one or more devices that are separate to the server to perform additional processing. There is no Scanshare Enterprise server instance running on the separate servers, just a service that runs in the background.
- The Managing cluster option uses one or more separate servers to perform processing and backup tasks. Unlike the Processing option, these servers must have a Scanshare Enterprise server instance running on them.
- Users can be added manually and their details can be modified at any time. Users can be placed in groups, allowing administrators to change the settings of all users in a group in one go and thus speeding up administration tasks.
- Users can be set up to use single sign-on, with username, email address, and home folder data being provided by Windows' Active Directory service. Single sign-on allows users to log on to an MFP using their Windows login details.
- OAuth (Open Authorization) is used to grant users access to services such as Google Drive, OneDrive, OneDrive for Business, and ShareFile via Scanshare Enterprise.
- Administrators can dictate the workflows to which individual users have access.



Users can be enabled, disabled, deleted, and modified easily from within the Users screen.

CONTENTS ▶

[Features/Productivity](#)

[Usability](#)

[IT Admin/Security](#)

[Support/Training](#)

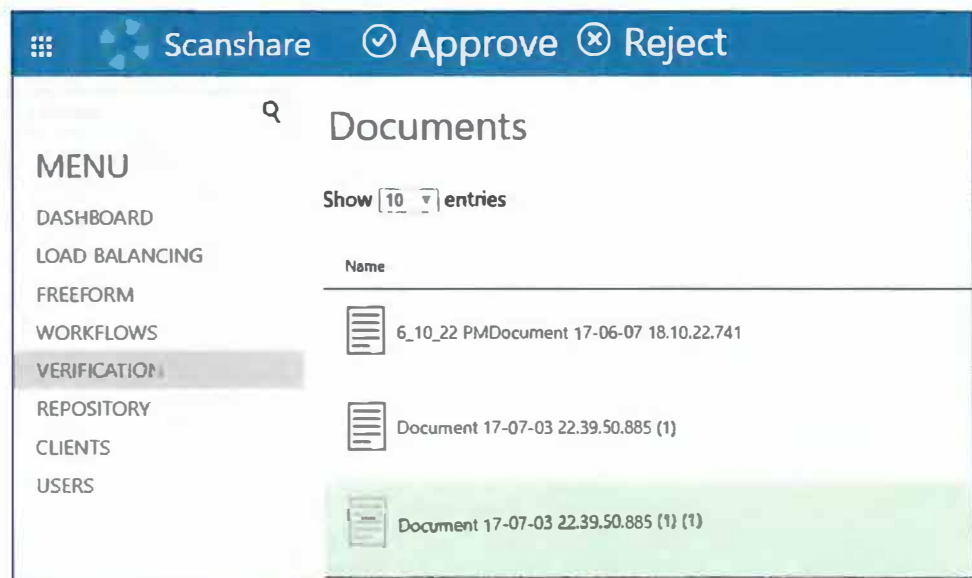
[Value](#)

- Workflow designers can use regular expressions to validate typed input that has been entered in response to a question. This ensures that input is of the required type, such as "yes" or "no".
- Administrators can specify the final destinations of scanned documents in the Store section of the workflow design screen. The toolbox for the Store section consists of many connectors to various database third-party applications such as Microsoft SharePoint, Synergy Enterprise and Amazon Web Services, cloud storage services such as Google Drive and Dropbox, email, and FTP, among others. It can even connect to the Xero cloud-based accounting service. The connectors available depend on the licence purchased.
- Connecting to a third-party application, server, or cloud storage service involves entering information such as authentication details, IP addresses, and URLs, with the exact details depending on the third-party application, server, or cloud storage service.
- If an email is selected in the Store section, administrators can enter a static, literal email address for the recipient or they can use a variable so that the recipient's email address can be dynamically inserted. Email messages can be styled using regular word processing tools, including tables and images.
- Documents can be routed to an organization's SQL database. The Database tool must be configured with a connection string and an SQL query.
- The Script tool lets administrators use Visual Basic Script to fashion some novel destinations for the workflow. This helps organizations tailor workflows to their specific needs.
- Administrators can select multiple tools in the Store section so that processed scans are routed to multiple places.
- Once configured, components can be reconfigured by clicking a spanner icon on the component. This opens a dialog box that lets administrators adjust certain options, with the exact options available dependent on the type of component selected.
- Zones can be scanned on multiple pages, and are identified by drawing rectangles on a sample input document. Administrators can test the data extraction to make sure that the correct data is identified on the sample input document. Regular expressions can be used to make sure that data in the zone matches the expected input.
- Buyers Lab has seen a document workflow system that allows administrators to create dynamic zones where data can be successfully extracted from a zone that varies in size and/or position. A total amount on a credit card statement might not be located in exactly the same place on each statement, and a dynamic zone would recognize this and make sure the correct data is extracted. Buyers Lab would like to see such a feature added to Scanshare Enterprise, as it would help administrators create even more sophisticated workflows.

CONTENTS ▶

- [Features/Productivity](#)
- [Usability](#)
- [IT Admin/Security](#)
- [Support/Training](#)
- [Value](#)

- The Split trigger splits a single job into separate jobs at a specific page. An input document with 22 pages would be split into two jobs if the workflow designer has set the Split trigger to split the job after 10 pages, for example.
- The Free Form trigger allows an input job to be matched against one or more Free Form profiles before continuing execution of the workflow. Workflow designers can select the individual Free Form profiles they want the trigger to compare the input file against.
- Finally, workflow designers can elect to have jobs verified before execution of the workflow continues, and they can select the users who have the power to verify the document. This can be handy if a colleague must check a document such as an invoice or purchase order before it continues its journey through the workflow.
- Files that have been sent for verification can be approved or rejected in the Verification screen. The files appear as a list with a filename that only makes sense to Scanshare Enterprise, the name of the workflow from which it hails, and the date on which it was sent to the workflow.
- Jobs in the list can be previewed by double-clicking the job. Users can navigate between pages, view the various variables associated with the job, rotate the job, and zoom in and out.
- Triggers can be modified or deleted at any time.



Users with the authority to approve or reject a job can select it from the list, preview it, and view data about it, such as its scan resolution and bit depth.

- Multiple triggers can be created and initiated between tools, and a counter placed on the connection line between tools informs workflow designers of the number of triggers that are to be initiated. Triggers are executed sequentially, and the order of execution can be changed once a set of triggers has been created by dragging and dropping the list of triggers in the pop-up trigger menu.

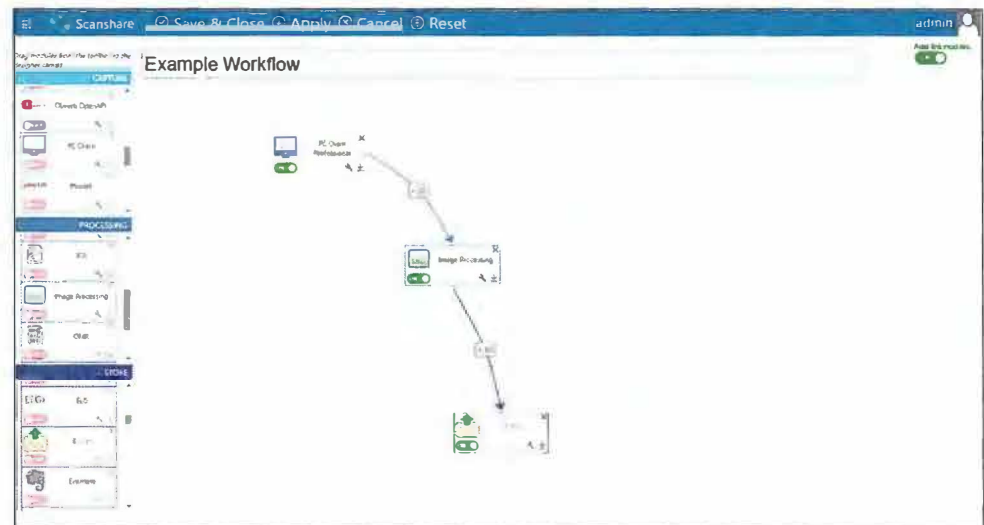
CONTENTS ▶

- [Features/Productivity](#)
- [Usability](#)
- [IT Admin/Security](#)
- [Support/Training](#)
- [Value](#)

STEP TWO: Scanshare Enterprise provides many tools to process the input documents. It can read specific zones on an input document to extract the data, apply image processing effects, perform OCR and OMR, overlay annotations, and export data. In the example below, input documents will undergo image processing before being routed to the next stage.



STEP THREE: The final stage involves specifying the places to which documents will be output. Multiple output methods are available and include cloud storage services, databases, other applications, and email, among others. In the example below, the processed documents will be routed to users via email.



CONTENTS ►

[Features/Productivity](#)

[Usability](#)

[IT Admin/Security](#)

[Support/Training](#)

[Value](#)

- Administrators must import a template that Scanshare Enterprise will use to recognize that it's a Free Form document. The document can then be selected by creating a Free Form trigger in a workflow and associating the document with that workflow.
- Administrators can set the lower and upper confidence bounds for the detection of documents, so that documents are more accurately recognized. The best settings will depend on the document/proforma that will be submitted to the workflow, so some trial-and-error testing should be undertaken before making a workflow live.

- Users can access an online, non-PDF manual from within Scanshare Enterprise. Users can use a table of contents to reach their desired section, or use the search function to find instances of a particular word or phrase. The online and PDF manuals both make good use of graphics to help users solve problems or learn about a particular feature. However, the manual doesn't provide detailed information on some features and it doesn't detail the installation and use of the PC clients, printer client, or MFP clients.

Licences

Scanshare Enterprise licences are charged on a per-server and per-client basis, with one year of maintenance being charged separately. The core package (POA) includes the Scanshare Enterprise server, one MFP client licence, and one year of maintenance. Customers are charged for each extra year of maintenance, which is in line with software platforms in this class. Unlike some others, there is not a separate per-user licence cost on top of the server and MFP licences.

Additional modules to add functionality, such as the OMR engine and advanced workflow engine, can be added so, all told, Scanshare Enterprise represents a compelling value given the time (and hence money) it can save an organization.

CONTENTS ▶

[Features/Productivity](#)

[Usability](#)

[IT Admin/Security](#)

[Support/Training](#)

[Value](#)