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## Databank helps businesses manage mounds of paperwork

**By Deborah Willoughby**  
**Montgomery Advertiser**

You know what your household's documents look like: power bills, product warranties, insurance policies, mortgage or rent contracts, bank statements, tax forms, birth certificates, pet vaccination certificates, investment reports, children's school report cards, backups for your computer files.

So you can imagine what it's like for an insurance office, or a bank, or a hospital. Businesses have to handle massive amounts of paperwork, and they have to keep their documents both accessible and private.

When Dave Jackson founded Databank Business Services Inc. in Montgomery 15 years ago, he was looking at providing backup information for customers.

"I had an idea of how to create a job for myself," Jackson said. "Initially it was to provide disaster-recovery services. It has grown over the years as we see needs that the customers have."

These days, Databank provides "cradle to the grave" information management.

"Everything we do revolves around information resources, from high-tech digital imaging to digital storage to low-tech shredding of paper," Jackson said.

That means selling and installing filing systems, devising archiving strategies and information storage plans and providing airtight security. And it means destruction of documents in a manner that prevents security breaches.



Clerical specialist Paul Hansen works in the paper record room at Databank Business Services.

-- Julie Bennett

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A machine at Databank scans paper records at a rate of 200 documents per minute and converts them into digital images.

-- Julie Bennett

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Charlie Gammill, marketing manager, said, "We manage information so that it doesn't take up too much space, that it's secure, that documents can be retrieved as needed, and that it can be disposed of in a secure way."

Gammill said Databank is central Alabama's best-kept secret because of its emphasis on security.

"It's like Fort Knox," he said.

Jackson, speaking from his purposely nondescript headquarters, said, "We just don't need to be in the spotlight. We think the security aspect is more important."

That's why trucks don't have the company's name on them. And why the facilities in downtown and west Montgomery aren't easy to find.

Databank's buildings are monitored at all times, with security measures reminiscent of what's seen in movies like "Ocean's Eleven."

Some areas have dual-key systems that need two people, each with a different key, to provide access. Inside, the filing cabinets are double-locked.

"We record everything that goes on in here," said Cameron Sauce, general manager.

There are ship cargo containers full of state records that no one at Databank has keys to.

Security also means keeping delicate materials in protected environments. In an operations room, magnetic items are stored in vaults that are maintained at 70 degrees, with 50 percent humidity.

The attention to security follows through to the very end: a shredding system that feeds into an onsite papermaking machine that produces molded and stackable packaging inserts. The paper is reduced to fibers by the shredder. During the molding process, all of the ink floats off the paper remnants. The resulting products are used instead of Styrofoam for cushioning shipping boxes.

The shredding process is monitored and recorded, and customers can watch their paper or electronic information being destroyed.

Before a document arrives at the shredder, however, it has been tracked from the moment of its inception.

Documents are sorted and labeled with bar codes as soon as they arrive at Databank's imaging center. The bar codes stay with the documents as they are sorted and scanned, filed, boxed and archived.

An increasing amount of information must be kept under precise conditions to meet a growing number of regulations.

For example, many documents must be scanned in color because financial institutions are requiring that signatures on important documents be made in blue ink. With the high quality of photocopiers these days, it's hard to tell if a document is an original or a copy if the signatures are in black ink.

The complications presented by new technology and new regulations are business opportunities. For example, Gary Gammon, senior vice president of marketing for Montgomery operations for Bell Microproducts, said, "E-mail is as critical as any hard-copy documents produced these days."



Barbara Davis operates a machine that scans paper records and converts them into digital images at Databank Business Services.

-- Julie Bennett

**More info:**

**DATABANK BUSINESS SERVICES INC.**

Founder and president: Dave Jackson

Employees: 75

Telephone: (334) 834-7012

On the Web: [www.databankinc.com](http://www.databankinc.com)

Many companies need help documenting e-mails and other documents to meet federal compliance requirements.

Files and boxes are not stored in alphabetical order by name, or by account number, or by subject, or by business. Instead, all the documents are filed in random order.

"The logic in the system is in the location," said general manager Sauce.

When a customer requests a certain file, the database prints out a list of files to be retrieved in order of locations. Employees don't need to go back and forth through the stacks of files and boxes to find what is needed. They move in an orderly, organized path to pick out what is needed by customers the day.

It's an extreme level of organization. Does Jackson carry his intense attention to documentation to his private life?

"When I go home, I don't want to keep practicing what I do," he said, smiling. "I use the horizontal filing concept at home, the concept of layering."

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