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TO ANYONE ELSE, MISPLACING only two of 40,000 pages would be considered a good day at the office. For Paul Engel, president and chief technology officer of the Lexington-based company VeBridge, formerly Source Imaging, something had to change.

As a document imaging service bureau, VeBridge helps clients manage their growing mounds of office paper by scanning, indexing and saving a company's most important documents in easily accessible computerized formats. Corrupted image files, lost documents and technical scanning errors are rare, but they have the potential to create enormous costs and legal liability issues for VeBridge's clients. The company's clients include large medical groups, financial institutions and legal firms, among others. The labor required to protect against these errors by physically opening and checking each document would be expensive and time-consuming. Engel decided there had to be a better way, and he created one.

"When VeBridge was founded five years ago, there were very few software tools that dealt with the most serious issues in quality assurance," said Engel, who previously worked for the Lexington software company SCT Government Systems before starting VeBridge in March 1998. "I decided if I was going to be in a business like this, I had to master the programming tools that could solve these quality problems. It was a matter of self-preservation and added client value."

Engel's "data scrubbing" software, which he has since licensed to several other service bureaus across the country, provides a computerized quality inspection of every document file created and the associated key

VeBridge
Connecting People with Information

word databases that make retrieval easy for end-users. The software locates and opens each image file, scans every page for possible imperfections and searches for documents that have been combined together. The software also automatically checks the validity of the data in the database.

Engel's research shows that between 40% and 60% of knowledge workers' time is spent retrieving and refiling documents. When combined with the additional space savings associated with efficient document management, VeBridge's commitment to quality assurance provides its clients with a clear cost-benefit advantage over today's typical in-house scanning systems, Engel said.

"Companies are used to having their budgets filled with Fed Ex costs and filing clerks and knowledge workers operating at sixty-percent productivity," Engel said. "Our business has a direct influence on the P&L. It's not expensive to deliver this kind of quality. It takes more creativity and persistence than cost."



Paul Engel, president and chief technology officer of VeBridge.

With over 40 employees in its 5,500-square-foot office in downtown Lexington, VeBridge handles over 100,000 pages per day for more than 80 clients, including Cardiology Associates of Kentucky, Kentucky-American Water Company, the Central Kentucky Blood Center and the Lexington Herald-Leader.

As a result of his innovative software system, Engel has become a national expert on quality assurance and software issues for his industry, speaking often at trade association meetings and seminars such as The Association of Work Process Improvement (TAWPI) and the Association of Information and Imaging Management (AIIM). Engel, who is a certified trainer for litigation support software, also uses his programming skills to help clients navigate their document files and mission critical data with easy, customized application "scripts." In 2001, Engel was awarded first place in an international software development contest for a scripting program designed to save law firms tens of thousands of dollars, and he has sold hundreds of other helpful scripting programs to law firms nationwide.

Bob Quick, president of Commerce Lexington, noted: "Paul Engel's creativity and his dedication to quality have made a real difference in the field of document imaging technology. In ensuring the highest standards of service for his own clients, he is raising the bar for document imaging services nationwide."



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> If you know of other entrepreneurial, e-type ventures in the Lexington area that deserve to be featured in this series, please e-mail Gina Greathouse at ggreathouse@commercelexington.com.