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SOPA-Scan[®] and SOPA Gold[®]

Scanning BBS Data

We have listened to your feedback for some time that entering data into SOPA through the desktop User Interface (UI) is labor-intensive. Some of you don't have administrative assistants to do the data entry, and depend on the observers to enter their own data. We understand the logistical problems, but we did not want to introduce another "solution" that actually caused more problems because of inaccuracy or the cost for 3rd party scanning technology. I am happy to announce that we can now offer not one, but TWO scanning solutions, thanks to the efforts of our Dr. William Hutchison! They will be available to subscribers of SOPA Gold[®] when that level of service is officially launched in January 2018. Bill will talk about these new technologies at our booth at Behavioral Safety Now 2017.

SOPA's new scannable observation forms minimize the effort for the observers as well as the administrator. The Safe/Concern/Feedback markups can easily be read correctly by our software, while the observer and context fields are entered in the most efficient ways possible, described below. Users can hand-write general comments and behavior-specific comments, which SOPA-Scan saves as images that can be displayed in the Comments and Concerns report.

Advantages of Our Scanning Solutions

- SOPA-Scan reduces errors introduced accidentally by manual entering of data from a paper form, and requires much less time on the part of the data enterer.
- No special equipment is required! You can use any of the most common

office scanners (for instance, all-in-one office printer that sells for between \$100 and \$400 have scanners). Choose one that comes equipped with a document feeder, so you can scan a stack of observation forms at one time and so the feeder will align them consistently.

- The forms can be printed on almost any office printer.
- No additional fees, such as the per-scan fee charged by some companies that offer scanning solutions.
- Forms are automatically designed by software that uses the checklist specifications in the SOPA database, at no cost! If a checklist is modified, the form will immediately reflect the changes and can be reprinted.
- A batch of observations can be processed at one time. When there are processing issues (i.e. questionable form entries), the software pops up a message displaying the image of the problem area and suggesting a resolution and other options that can be accepted with a click.
- If you have access to the Chrome browser and a printer, you can print any number of forms directly from your regular SOPA web interface. If you prefer, we can send you PDF files you can print.

Two Approaches to Scanning

Many people think “scanning” is synonymous with Optical Character Recognition (OCR). OCR is certainly the most prominent technical solution, but not the only one or necessarily the best one.

OCR scanning requires the user to carefully print block letters, each inside a box. This can be slow, tedious, and can produce errors, since some people print neater than others and are better able to stay within the boxes. The form must have enough blocks to accommodate the longest names, dates and other OCR fields.

The “non-OCR” alternative we’ve developed uses checkboxes rather than block letters. Users mark boxes to indicate their numeric ID, month/day, shift, location, etc.

Which Version Works Better?

Dr. Hutchison conducted a systematic comparison of OCR and non-OCR versions of the same checklist with 10 varied users. After they had filled out each form 2 times to familiarize themselves with the forms, they could fill out

the non-OCR version in half the time! And mainly for that reason, all 10 test users strongly preferred that version. The other advantage is that scanning the checkboxes is virtually error-free while OCR can never be perfect, so administrators of the scanning can greatly reduce the time to do error checking.

Whichever is your company's preference -- OCR scanning or our non-OCR alternative -- we can handle it!

We now have two ways to enable scanning – the OCR method, and an alternative that uses checkboxes for letters and numbers! Both are accurate for BBS data entry.

How Can We Get SOPA-Scan? “SOPA Gold”

Both methods are now in beta test but beginning in 2018, they are available to any company that subscribes to the SOPA Gold service. SOPA Gold offers not only one of the two scanning technologies, but also our new *SOPA Anywhere!* tablet data entry app, and *Reports by Subscription* (the latter two additions to SOPA will be described in future *SOPA Observer* newsletters). If you're interested in upgrading to the new level of service, please talk to us or Mike Johnson at Quality Safety Edge to make arrangements.