SCANEE

WHITE PAPER

What invoice data entry really costs

The finance brief: measure today's cost, work out the break-even point, evaluate Scanee in 14 days

PUBLISHED BY

Scanee (scanee.ai)

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DOCUMENT STRUCTURE

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Executive summary

- Entering a vendor invoice is more than typing an amount. It covers receiving, reading, taxes, coding, approval, entry into the ERP and filing. The whole chain is what costs money.
- Most companies don't know that cost. It takes one hour and twenty invoices to measure it. This brief gives you the method.
- With Scanee, your team stops typing and starts reviewing. The AI extracts each document in about 2 seconds, with a measured accuracy of 99.4% on extracted fields. The document sits next to the data, coding uses your own account lists, and the validated invoice is created in your ERP with its PDF.
- Estimate for 2,000 documents a month: about 183 hours freed up and $7,134 saved each month, or close to $85,600 a year (assumptions in section 4).
- The break-even calculation fits on one line: Scanee pays for itself as soon as the time saved each month, multiplied by your hourly cost, exceeds the plan price. On the Pro plan ($99 a month) at $40 an hour, break-even is about 2 h 30 saved per month.
- Your account is ready in 2 minutes, and the free 14-day trial, with no credit card, is enough to check that gain on your own invoices before you decide.

Key figures

Figure	What it measures	Type
99.4%	AI accuracy on extracted fields	Measured by Scanee
~2 seconds	Time to extract one document	Measured by Scanee
5 to 7 minutes	Manual handling time for one invoice: sorting, entry, checking	Estimate
~30 seconds	Time to review one document with Scanee	Estimate

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Figure	What it measures	Type
1.5% to 3%	Error rate of manual data entry	Estimate
2 minutes	Account setup: there is nothing to install	Observed

01 One invoice, nine steps

Follow a vendor invoice from the moment it arrives to the moment it is filed. In most accounts payable teams, it goes through the same steps.

#	Step	What happens	What can go wrong
1	Receiving	The invoice arrives by email, by mail or in a shared folder	It sits in someone's personal inbox
2	Opening	Someone opens it, renames it, files it	A duplicate received twice, through two channels
3	Header	Vendor, number, dates, purchase order	A typo in the number, the wrong due date
4	Line items	Description, quantity, unit price, amount	Lines missed on a multi-page invoice
5	Taxes	GST, QST or HST, split from the net amount	Tax split incorrectly, input tax credit or refund lost
6	Coding	GL account, cost centre, division	Wrong account, fixed at month-end
7	Approval	The manager approves the expense	Reminder emails, invoice stuck waiting
8	ERP entry	The invoice is keyed again into the accounting software	A gap between the paper and the entry
9	Filing	The PDF is archived and linked to the entry	Document nowhere to be found at audit time

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Each step takes little time. Added up, and multiplied by the month's invoices, they take a large share of a team's week. And the errors made in steps 3 to 6 don't cost anything when they happen, but later: at reconciliation, at close, or when the auditor asks.

02 The costs nobody measures

Data entry time is the visible cost. Four other costs often go unnoticed.

Errors and fixing them. Manual data entry is estimated to produce 1.5% to 3% errors. A wrongly entered invoice doesn't only cost the minute of the mistake. It costs the time to find it, often at reconciliation or close, then to fix it in the ERP. That time rarely belongs to a clerk: it often belongs to the controller.

Taxes split incorrectly. GST or QST mixed up with the net amount means an input tax credit (ITC) or input tax refund (ITR) claimed in excess or forgotten. The gap shows up at filing time, or later during an audit.

Delays. An invoice waiting for entry or approval means a lost early-payment discount, a late fee, or a strained vendor relationship.

Depending on one person. When only one person knows the vendors, the accounts and the exceptions, their vacation becomes a risk. That knowledge is written down nowhere.

03 Measure your current cost in one hour

No study needed. Take twenty recent invoices that represent your month: simple and long ones, regular and new vendors.

Step 1 — Time it. For each one, measure the total time, from opening to filing, including approval if the same person handles it. Take the average. That is your time per invoice, in minutes: **t**.

Step 2 — Count. How many invoices do you process per month? That is **N**. Use the average of the last three months; year-end often skews the number.

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Step 3 — Price the hour. Use the loaded hourly cost of the person doing the entry: salary, benefits and payroll costs, divided by hours worked. That is **C**, in dollars per hour.

Step 4 — Calculate.

> Monthly data entry cost = N × t ÷ 60 × C

If you know them, add the time spent fixing errors at close and the discounts lost. They aren't in the formula, but they are in your income statement.

Your worksheet

Input	Your value
N — invoices per month	
t — minutes per invoice (average of 20)	
C — loaded hourly cost ($)	
Monthly cost = N × t ÷ 60 × C	
Time fixing errors at close (hours per month, optional)	
Lost discounts and late fees (per month, optional)	

An example: a batch of 30 invoices

At 5 to 7 minutes per invoice (estimate), a batch of 30 invoices takes 2 h 30 to 3 h 30 of work, close to half a day. At $40 an hour, that is about $120 of labour for that one batch. With Scanee, each invoice is extracted in about 2 seconds and the documents in a batch are processed in parallel: what remains is the review.

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04 The break-even point

The reverse calculation is even more useful: how much time does Scanee need to save you to pay for itself?

> Hours to save per month = plan price ÷ C

Plan	Price per month	Break-even at $30/h	Break-even at $40/h	Break-even at $60/h
Starter	$39	1 h 18	59 min	39 min
Pro	$99	3 h 18	2 h 29	1 h 39
Scale	$199	6 h 38	4 h 59	3 h 19

Read this table against your own volume. On the Pro plan, at $40 an hour, Scanee pays for itself as soon as it saves you about 2 h 30 a month. Across 600 invoices, that is 15 seconds saved per invoice.

Estimate for 2,000 documents a month

Assumptions: 6 minutes per invoice by hand, 30 seconds of review with Scanee, a loaded hourly cost of $40, Scale plan ($199 a month, 2,500 credits).

Item	By hand	With Scanee	Difference
Time per document	6 minutes	30 seconds of review	12 times less
Hours per month	200 h	16.7 h	183.3 h freed up
Labour cost	$8,000	$667	$7,333
Scanee subscription	—	$199	

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Item	By hand	With Scanee	Difference
Setup fees	—	$0	
Total per month	**$8,000**	**$866**	**$7,134 saved**

That is about **$85,600 a year**, and a subscription that pays for itself in the first month. These are estimates: replace the assumptions with your own numbers (section 3), then check the actual review time during the trial (section 7).

05 What Scanee changes, step by step

Scanee doesn't change your accounting process. It removes the typing and keeps the controls.

Step	Before	With Scanee
Receiving	Emails, folders, paper, sorted by hand	Invoices land in the project: drag and drop, import from Google Drive, OneDrive, Dropbox or SharePoint, a dedicated email address (Pro and Scale) or the API
Header and lines	Typed field by field	Extracted automatically, including line-item tables across several pages
Taxes	Split by hand	Taxes and tax zone extracted into their own fields (separate GST and QST, or the total tax amount, depending on the template); a plain-language instruction can spell out your rules
Review	Paper read against the screen	The document on the left, the data on the right; clicking a value shows where it sits on the invoice
Coding	From memory or in a spreadsheet	Vendors, GL accounts and cost centres imported from your ERP; you pick from those lists, on the header and on each line
Sign-off	Emails and reminders	The document moves to "Completed" once reviewed; sending to the ERP can be limited to that status

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Step	Before	With Scanee
ERP entry	Keyed again	The validated invoice is created in Business Central, QuickBooks Online, Sage Accounting or Odoo, and in Xero for a project created from the Xero template, with its lines and the PDF attached. Tax handling varies by ERP: see the ERP connectors white paper
Filing	A folder to keep up to date	The PDF stays linked to the invoice, in Scanee and in the ERP
Traceability	Who changed what?	Every change is logged: old and new value, author, date

For systems that aren't connected directly, export to CSV or Excel in the column layout you define, through Zapier or Make, or through the API.

06 You stay in control

A tool that speeds up data entry must not weaken internal controls. Scanee is built for the opposite.

Nobody approves on your behalf. The AI suggests; someone on your team reviews each document before export. The source document is always shown next to the data.

Access is limited. You invite your team and choose each person's role in each project: Admin, Editor or Reader. Only Admins and Editors can select and export documents in bulk.

Nothing leaves without review. Set sending to the ERP to the "Completed" status: an invoice only gets there once someone has reviewed it.

Everything leaves a trace. The change log answers the auditor's questions: who changed this amount, when, and what the original value was.

Your rules are written down. The fields, account lists and instructions of each project are set up in Scanee. Knowledge no longer depends on a single person.

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Your data stays yours. Files and data are hosted in Canada, and the AI does not train on your documents. For details, see Scanee's security and privacy overview.

07 Evaluate Scanee in 14 days

The trial is free for 14 days and needs no credit card. Here is how to use it to decide on numbers.

Days 1 and 2 — Prepare. Create your account (2 minutes) and a "Vendor invoices" project. Set aside the twenty invoices you timed in section 3: they are your baseline.

Days 3 to 7 — Measure. Drop those twenty invoices into Scanee. This time, time the review and correction, per invoice. Note the fields you had to fix.

Days 8 to 12 — Connect. Connect your ERP or define your export format. Import your vendors and accounts. Process one real week of invoices.

Days 13 and 14 — Decide. Fill in the grid below.

Criterion	Measure	Your result
Time per invoice before	t (section 3)	
Time per invoice with Scanee	Average measured on days 3 to 7	
Hours saved per month	(before − with) × N ÷ 60	
Break-even for the target plan	Table in section 4	
Corrections needed	Fields fixed across 20 invoices	
Integration	Invoice created correctly in the ERP	
Adoption	Feedback from the person doing the entry today	

If the hours saved exceed your plan's break-even, the decision is easy. If not, you will know without having paid anything.

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08 Costs and plans

Prices in Canadian dollars, per month.

	Starter	Pro	Scale
Price	$39	$99	$199
Users	1	up to 5	up to 10
Projects	up to 3	up to 15	up to 30
Credits per month	500	1,000	2,500
Storage included	5 GB	25 GB	100 GB
Email intake	—	yes	yes
Zapier, Make and API	—	yes	yes
Your own storage (S3, Google Cloud, Azure, SFTP)	—	—	yes

One credit usually processes one standard document of one to three pages; a more complex document can take more. With pay-as-you-go (Pro and Scale), each extra credit beyond the plan is billed $0.01 at the end of the cycle. Connections to ERPs, spreadsheets and cloud folders are included, with no integration fees. For higher volumes, the Enterprise plan is priced to measure.

09 Questions to ask before you buy

Whether you choose Scanee or another tool, these questions prevent bad surprises.

1. Is the cost predictable? What happens if I go over my volume?
2. Who reviews the data before it reaches the ERP? Is the source document shown next to it?
3. Does the tool create the invoice in my ERP, with the PDF, or do I still have to import a file?
4. Can I require a human review before the invoice goes into the ERP?

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5. Is every change logged, with its author and date?
6. Where is my data hosted, where is it processed, and does the AI train on it?
7. How long does it take to get started, and who needs to be involved?
8. Can I try it on my own documents before I pay?

Conclusion

Invoice data entry costs what you haven't measured yet. One hour and twenty invoices are enough to find out. Scanee's break-even point then takes one line to calculate, and the 14-day trial lets you check the gain on your documents, with your team, before paying anything.

Next step. Time twenty invoices this week, then create your trial account at scanee.ai. For a demo with your own documents, contact us through scanee.ai.

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